

THE MUNICIPAL PARK

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT, circa 1840-1880

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Council for National Academic Awards for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

School of Art History  
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July 1985

## DECLARATION

While registered as a candidate for the degree for which this submission is made, the author has not been a registered candidate for another award of the CNAA, or of a University, during the research programme.



ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify the main factors contributing to the development of the municipal park in England, and to relate them to park design and use. Official recognition of the need for parks dated from 1833 and focussed on the needs of the working classes in the largest urban centres. An analysis of park development established the various forms of public park, the main modes of park acquisition and their geographical distribution. In the period between 1845 and 1860 parks were developed mainly in the industrial centres of the north-west. Subsequently, this broadened to include resorts and smaller towns.

Manchester was the first of the industrial centres to establish municipal parks. Other important early parks were established in Birkenhead and London (Victoria Park). The processes whereby these parks were established, and their design and use, illustrated the preferences of those in authority and showed that parks were seen not only in physical terms but also in social and political terms. The ways in which the "problem" of working class recreation was identified affected parks. They provided an alternative to the public house, and had an educational role to play. The type of meeting permitted, the choice of sports, and of music, showed clearly that parks were seen as places where the classes could mix, but on middle and ruling class terms.

After the passing of the Public Health Act 1875 a major acceleration in park development occurred. At the same time there was a growing awareness that the existing large parks did not solve the problem of access to open space for the densest urban areas. The 1880s saw the development of small recreation grounds in working class districts and the transformation of disused burial grounds into open space for recreation. This indicated that a major change in public opinion regarding the need for accessible open space had occurred. The municipal park provided enormous enjoyment, and it was brought into being by a variety of means in which municipal enterprise, politics and social conscience all played a part.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Director of Studies, Dr G.H. Martin, Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office, for his criticism and advice. I would also like to thank John Pugsley, Rowan Roenisch and my colleagues in the School of Art History for all their help and encouragement. The assistance of local history librarians, too numerous to mention by name, has proved invaluable and I would like to express my gratitude to them. Finally, I would like to record my thanks to the Guild of St George whose generous grant aided my research on the Manchester/Salford parks.

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published in Garden History, Summer, 1985.

This paper is based on material which appears in Chapters Four and  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

BRIC	Birkenhead Road and Improvement Committee
CPS	Commons Preservation Society
GLC	Greater London Council
LC	Liverpool Council
MBC	Manchester Borough Council
MCC	Manchester City Council
MPCS	Manchester Parks Committee Scrapbook
MPGBPA	Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard and Playground Association
MPPC	Manchester Public Parks Committee
MSSA	Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association
PRO	Public Record Office
SCPW	Select Committee on Public Walks
VPP	Victoria Park Papers

## INTRODUCTION

The creation of the municipal park in the middle years of the nineteenth century has been seen as a prime example of the Victorian "aptitude for passionate reform" and as an attempt to improve the physical, moral and spiritual condition of the urban dweller.<sup>1</sup> Protected from the realities of its city surroundings by gates and railings, the municipal park represented an idealised landscape in which the air was clean, the spirit could be refreshed by contact with nature, and the body renewed by exercise.

Yet such a view is necessarily an incomplete one for it does not identify the nature of the improvements, nor how they were viewed by either the improvers or the beneficiaries, nor does it tell us how they would be achieved. Whilst the municipal park represented an idealised landscape, it was also a real landscape set in an urban environment and used by real people in various ways.

Historians of the nineteenth century have directed their attention to urban development both in general terms and in terms of specific institutions, places and themes.<sup>2</sup> There have been detailed studies of working/class housing, railway stations, public houses, town halls, of the activities of the building industry and of many of the other physical components of the city, but there has been no comparably detailed study of the municipal park in this period. Yet almost every town of any size had a municipal park and many towns had a number of them. These parks ranged in size from the very small, that is, of less than an acre, to sites of several hundred acres, and they ranged in layout from the very simple to the very sophisticated. Whatever their size or layout, they contributed green spaces in a built-up area, provided a place for walking, playing or organized sports, and formed an important part of the urban fabric.

The municipal park is a public park owned by the municipal authority and freely open to the public. But not all public parks are municipal parks. Public parks include open spaces to which the public is granted access on certain conditions which might be withdrawn at any time. Only in the case of the municipal park, where the land is owned by the local authority,

does complete control rest with them and only then is the unalienable right of the public to use the land for recreation secure. The municipal park developed in Britain from about 1840, whereas public parks existed long before this, the royal parks probably being the best known examples. Several histories have been published of public parks such as royal parks and of urban parks in general, particularly those of London.<sup>3</sup> In addition, there are accounts of municipal parks in certain cities. For example, J.J. Sexby, the first chief officer of the London County Council Parks Department which was created in 1892, wrote the history of the municipal parks of London, The Municipal Parks and Open Spaces of London, and traced their development from the 1840s to 1898.<sup>4</sup> W.W. Pettigrew, superintendent of the Manchester municipal parks for twenty years from 1907, recorded his experience of their layout, management and administration in Municipal Parks: Layout, Management and Administration<sup>5</sup> and D. M'Lellan traced the history of the parks and open spaces of Glasgow from ancient times to 1894 in Glasgow Public Parks<sup>6</sup> which included details of the municipal parks. Studies have also been made of urban park development internationally. Among the most recent and comprehensive of these were D. Hennebo and E. Schmidt, Geschichte des Stadtgrüns<sup>7</sup> and N.T. Newton, Design on the Land.<sup>8</sup> Both of them included developments in Britain, but the one major study of the urban park in Britain in the nineteenth century is G.F. Chadwick's The Park and the Town, 1966. The title is significant for Chadwick was concerned to show the broad outlines of the development of the urban park from the early years of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. Although the municipal park had a place in this development, it was not the main core of his study, which covered developments not only in Britain but also in Europe and America. Chadwick related the design of the urban park to the English landscape movement of the eighteenth century and showed how pleasure gardens, public walks and botanic gardens<sup>9</sup> contributed to the open space available to certain sections of the public. The contribution of Joseph Paxton was established<sup>10</sup> and a short section was devoted to the parks of the north, while a lengthier one looked at the development of the London parks. The main emphasis of Chadwick's work was on the physical layout of the various parks and the influences that led to them, but he was fully aware that this approach was only one among many possible approaches.

Little enough material has been written concerning the contemporary garden, as such, but even less material is available concerning the point at which



the social sciences enter the horizon.<sup>11</sup>

It is apparent that there is a need for a study of the municipal park in the nineteenth century which identifies and analyses more fully some of the major factors and influences on its early development and its national use.

Few of the histories of parks in the nineteenth century differentiated clearly between municipal parks, which were freely accessible, and public parks in which the public had access to only a limited area, or were admitted for a restricted period, or were admitted only on payment of an entry fee. In order to identify municipal parks to which the public had unrestricted free access, it is necessary to distinguish between the various forms of public park. Furthermore, the individuals and organisations seeking to promote public open spaces during the course of the century did not always distinguish between the terms public park, garden and walk, although landscape gardeners and designers saw clear distinctions between them. John Claudius Loudon, the landscape gardener and one of the most influential writers and designers on this subject, identified three types of public garden:

I. Promenades; that is walks or roads, of considerable extent, among trees, and such other verdant scenery as the situation may afford, heightened and rendered more interesting by art: for example the walks at Oxford, and the public squares.

II. Parks; that is, enclosed spaces, of considerable extent, varied by wood, water, rocks, building, and other objects; and surrounded and interspersed by roads and walks; grazed by sheep, deer or cattle; and without flowers or shrubs; for example Hyde Park.

III. Gardens; which are of several kinds; that which is common to them all being, that they are enclosed; and that, where there is turf in them, it is not grazed by any kind of cattle, but kept smoothly mown.<sup>12</sup>

Loudon then further subdivided gardens into scientific gardens, landscape gardens, gardens for recreation and refreshment, and gardens for burial. At the time he was writing and indeed before he died in 1843, there were insufficient examples of municipal parks for him to attempt a definition. However, by 1852, when C. H. J. Smith the Scottish landscape gardener wrote Parks and Pleasure Grounds, sufficient public parks and municipal parks had been opened for him to devote a chapter to, Public Parks and Gardens

and to define public parks thus:

Public parks are large enclosed pieces of ground in the vicinity of cities or towns, partly covered with trees and shrubs, partly consisting of pastures, lawns, and pleasure grounds with their usual decorations and provided with other means and appliances for the recreation and amusement of the inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

Unless the terms park, walk, garden were employed by landscape gardeners and designers, the type of open space under discussion was not necessarily evident from the text and the particular facilities or uses of that space cannot be assumed without further research. The clear identification of municipal parks and the distinction between them and public parks in general formed one of the early problems of this study.

None of the publications on urban parks attempted to identify the main influences on the early phase of municipal park development, other than in terms of landscape design. While there was a tendency in the local studies to introduce the context of their particular parks in very general terms, it was not their intention to present an overview of the development of municipal parks nor to relate them to urban, municipal and social development. Furthermore, with the exception of Sexby's and Pettigrew's, few local studies were concerned with park use, their main emphasis being on the layout of the particular parks. This study will attempt to identify these other influences on park development and to investigate the role of municipal parks within the urban fabric from other points of view than that of landscape design.

The term municipal park signifies that it should be seen as one of the achievements of municipal corporations and should be associated predominantly with the period following the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. But municipal parks were developed in certain urban centres long before the nineteenth century. For example, in Exeter

in 1612, Northern-hay (was) levelled, and a pleasant walk made thereon, and upon the Mount over against Gallants-Bower, seats or benches of timber were erected, and at the Cities charge.<sup>14</sup>

This site of approximately four and a half acres was cared for continuously by the city since that date and is still in use today. In Shrewsbury, a

walk was laid out along the banks of the Severn in 1719. This area of twenty acres, known as the Quarry, was accessible to the public at all times and kept up by the Corporation.<sup>15</sup> In Leicester, the New Walk, which was ten yards wide, was formed by the Corporation in 1785 as "a promenade for the recreation of the inhabitants".<sup>16</sup> However, these were isolated examples and the main development of municipal parks occurred in the period that is the subject of this study, 1840-1880. They were achieved by a variety of means and it is only by investigating a range of these that the role of the local authority can be identified.

For much of the nineteenth century, legislation governing the actions which local authorities could undertake severely inhibited the development of municipal parks and it was not until 1875 that they could raise central government loans to buy land to develop parks. A history of the legislation which affected the development of municipal parks is essential to an understanding of the roles of central and local government, the benefactor and the local developer. The municipal park was part of nineteenth century urban development, therefore it will be important to assess the nature of the relationship between them. The physical, economic and social dimensions of this relationship include the contribution of municipal parks to the question of the health of towns and the relationship of the location of the municipal park to the particular urban structure. The type of housing built immediately adjacent to the park and its proximity to particular areas of housing, such as working class housing, will be investigated, as will the economics of the development of the park and its environs. Municipal parks developed within the context of an expanding population, a changing economy, and the growth of transport facilities. These changes had a direct physical impact on the shape of the major urban centres which showed themselves in the changing patterns of activity as the century progressed. In central urban areas, manufacturing activity and residential building were increasingly replaced by commercial and municipal activities and the new retailing techniques which resulted eventually in the department stores. The growth of transport brought with it not only the spread of the suburbs but also the building of major road and rail systems. During the course of these changes, the need for better town planning was increasingly recognized. The ways in which the problems associated with the development and location of municipal parks contributed to this recognition will be examined.



Much of the work on municipal parks so far published concentrated on their design and layout. This is such an important part of park development that it has to be included in any general view of the subject. The emphasis of this study, however, differs from previous studies in several significant ways. The relationship between the design of certain municipal parks and their surroundings will be analysed in order to establish whether they were designed to be an integral part of those surroundings, and in order to determine their function in the local urban fabric. The details of the design and layout of particular municipal parks will be analysed in order to relate their design to the range of uses that were accommodated within them. Park use in the nineteenth century is an area which has been the subject of little systematic research and this study will attempt to analyse park design in relation to attitudes towards recreation in that period.

The size of the topic and the volume of the material which it could include presents a problem. Urban and municipal development, town planning, social history, landscape and garden history are all involved. The major problem confronting the researcher in such a potentially large and diffuse topic is that of the identification and analysis of the major influences on park development and the relationship between those influences and the selection of particular municipal parks. The large number of municipal parks which came into being during the century makes it quite unrealistic to attempt to analyse them all in equal detail, although it will be important to record a chronology of their inauguration in order to establish the pattern of park development as a whole in the period being investigated. Although the early development of the municipal park occurred mainly in England, developments in Wales and Scotland will be included in this chronology. Paxton was associated with the design of some of the Scottish parks and reference will be made to these where appropriate. However, because of the size of this subject, the main core of this study will be on developments in England.

The identification of the first municipal park, the establishment of the means by which it was acquired and the ascertaining of those features which distinguished it from other contemporary public parks was the first major task. This park affords the first case study of a municipal park.



The provision of municipal parks showed the interest in improving the physical health of, and recreational facilities available to, the urban dweller and to working people in particular. It will be argued that, in the early years of the century, the identification of the need for parks was closely linked with urban expansion, population growth and the effects of enclosure on access to open spaces for recreation. Pressure from the ruling class to provide parks, particularly in the major manufacturing towns of the north, increased from circa 1830. Their perception of working people, the massacre at Peterloo (1819), and the radical movements of 1815-20 and 1830-2, formed part of the background to this increased pressure for parks.

The influences on the development of the municipal park range from social and political ones to particular local and municipal ones. In establishing these influences, a chronological approach has been adopted for sections I and III of this study and the reasons for the selection of particular public and municipal parks for detailed study will be established in the appropriate chapters.

Section I of this study will trace the chronological development of parks between 1800-45 in order to establish the various forms of public park and in order to differentiate between them and municipal parks. The need for parks was gradually identified in the period 1800-33 and this marks the first phase of park development. That need became translated into practice in the second phase of park development between 1833 and 1845. It is in this period that the first municipal park has been identified, and the physical, social and political role of the parks established in this period will be analysed.

In Section II a thematic rather than a chronological approach is adopted. So many municipal parks were developed in the period 1845-80 that it was not possible to study them all in detail, yet it was important to establish the pattern of park development and park design and use. The main means by which municipal parks were acquired will be investigated together with some of the problems encountered. Those towns that were active in the matter of acquiring municipal parks will be identified and their geographical distribution established. Some parks were fully designed and laid out from the outset, while in others the design evolved

slowly. A detailed analysis of particular park design will make it possible to determine the range of facilities provided.

Parks provided a place in which people could enjoy various forms of recreation but the social group whose recreations were seen by the ruling class to pose a problem were the working class. The ways in which this "problem" was identified influenced the solutions arrived at, and evidence for this will be clearly seen in the permitted uses of the parks. It is in this area in particular that the problems of source material and the bias inherent in it becomes apparent. In many of the illustrations of parks in the nineteenth century, the people depicted as using them appear not to be working people but of the middle and upper classes.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, records of park use, whether of misdemeanours or of special occasions, tended to be written from official and ruling class points of view and it has been difficult to find out the experience of those working people who used the parks.

The main primary sources of information on the living conditions and working life of the majority of the population in the nineteenth century have, until recently, been the Parliamentary Papers and the Reports of Royal Commissions and Committees of Enquiry, and these must necessarily be biased, whether consciously or not, by the attitudes of the investigators who were seeking evidence or asking questions. The emphasis of the majority of these studies has been primarily on economic and social conditions and much less is known about entertainment and recreations, although local newspapers, journals and biographies provide a rich source of information. Recent studies have done something towards redressing this imbalance.<sup>18</sup>

In Section III the chronological approach is resumed. The role of park legislation and other factors in stimulating park development is evaluated. Certain changes in park architecture and design occur in the 1860s and 1870s and these are analysed by means of a study of the Liverpool and other parks. In the late 1870s, a change of emphasis towards the development of small parks and recreation grounds occurs. The reasons for these changes are analysed and their implications for later changes in town planning are evaluated.

Under the terms of the Public Health Act 1875, local authorities could for the first time raise central government loans to develop municipal parks and, from circa 1880, the numbers of new municipal parks increases and their geographical distribution broadens. This date therefore marks the end of the "struggle" to acquire municipal parks and forms a convenient and logical point at which to end this study.

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- 11 Chadwick, op.cit. p.313
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## SECTION I

This section seeks to establish how the need for parks was identified in the early decades of the nineteenth century and the major factors that contributed to that need. A study is made of the chronological development of parks between c.1800 and 1845, in order to identify the various forms of public park and in order to differentiate between them and municipal parks. From an investigation of the chief forces influencing the development of particular parks, it will be possible to ascertain whether any changes of emphasis occurred in this period. An investigation of the design and use of certain of the parks will indicate how their role was perceived.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE NEED FOR PARKS

A public sense of the need for parks evolved gradually during the first half of the nineteenth century. No specific date can be attributed to a gradual process but the date of official recognition of the problem is readily available. In 1833 the Select Committee on Public Walks presented its Report to Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The aim of that Report was to establish what open spaces were available for public use in the major towns and to recommend specific local and national action to ensure adequate provision of public open space in the future. Among the most significant factors contributing to the need for parks the Report identified urban growth and its effects on the availability of open space for recreation. It also identified certain social and moral factors which concerned the health, education and recreation of working people in particular. The Report therefore indicated some of the factors which contributed to establishing the need for parks, and these will be investigated further. The significance of other campaigns for parks, such as that of the Utilitarians, will also be discussed. Both the Utilitarians and the Select Committee on Public Walks (SCPW) identified the benefits that parks would bring and it is there that some of the attitudes of park promoters becomes clearer. The reasons for those attitudes and their relationship to social changes brought about by urban growth formed part of the indirect factors influencing the need for parks.

#### Population Growth and Urban Expansion

Until around 1740, the population of England and Wales had been static at about six million people and, of these, approximately one person in five lived in a town of any size. With the exception of London, those towns would, according to the present view, have been little more than large villages or small market towns. By the time of the census in 1801 the population of England and Wales had risen to nearly nine million and about two and a half million lived in towns. Fifty years later the population had doubled to nearly eighteen million, and 1851 marks the point when the population became equally divided between town-dwellers and country-dwellers. All the censuses following that of 1851 showed

an increase in the proportion of urban dwellers. By 1911 the population had again doubled and stood at thirty-six million, the town dwellers forming 80.1% of the population.<sup>2</sup>

In 1801 London had a population of 1,088,000 and was the largest urban centre in Britain, a position she continued to hold throughout the century. The largest populations of between 50,000 and 100,000 in 1801 were in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, and Bristol and those five towns became the first to achieve and surpass the population figure of 100,000.<sup>3</sup> During the first half of the century, those towns which were already major population centres, continued to grow. Between 1801 and 1831 the population of Manchester with Salford increased by more than four-fold from 89,000 to 303,000, while that of Liverpool increased by slightly less than five-fold from 82,000 to 376,000. By the middle of the century, a second group of towns had reached populations of over 100,000; these were Sheffield, Bradford, Nottingham, and Plymouth and, by 1881, there were twenty towns with populations of over 100,000 in England and Wales. The pattern of urban growth in the period 1851-81 was such that those towns that were the largest in the middle of the century, London, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Birmingham, continued to maintain their respective leads. By 1881, however, Bristol's population of 207,000 had been surpassed by that of Sheffield which stood at 285,000. Bristol was thus the exception among the early population centres for it did not maintain its growth throughout the period 1801-81.

During this period there was also a marked growth in the smaller towns associated with pleasure resorts. Some resorts, like Bath, which were well-established in the eighteenth century, continued to grow steadily in the first half of the nineteenth century and then gradually declined. But a phenomenon new to the nineteenth century was the growth of seaside resorts. Although Brighton was an established town by 1801 with a population of 7,000, its main growth occurred thereafter and, by 1881, its population stood at 108,000. Other seaside resorts such as Blackpool or Southend-on-Sea grew from virtually nothing at the beginning of the century to populations of 14,000 and 8,000 respectively by 1881. The rate of growth of many of these resorts was even greater than that sustained by the major manufacturing and commercial centres.<sup>4</sup>

Before the expansion of the urban population, the open spaces that



existed in towns were largely those remaining from medieval times and the spaces accessible to the public included the town square, the market place and the churchyards.<sup>5</sup> Adjacent to the town, publicly accessible open spaces included commons and wasteland, highways and footpaths which were within reasonable distance of any part of the town. Until towns had grown considerably, therefore, there was little need to set aside open space specifically for public use. Such publicly-accessible open spaces should be distinguished from semi-public open space in which access was restricted to certain members of the population, either by payment of an entrance fee, by membership of a club or society, or by being keyholders. Semi-public open space should also be distinguished from private open space. Bloomsbury Square, in London, built for the Earl of Southampton in 1661, Brunswick Square, Grosvenor Square, and many other squares which were developed in the eighteenth century, had the effect of adding new neighbourhoods to the city, each with their own semi-public open space.<sup>6</sup> The squares in such developments were normally accessible only to the residents of the houses facing them, provided they were keyholders. Pleasure-gardens, zoos, botanic gardens and, eventually, golf courses, were further examples of semi-public open space. These open spaces contributed to lowering the density of population in the districts in which they were situated, although the relationship between open space and population density was independent of the type of open space. But the relationship between public accessibility and open space depended on the status of the open space and whether it was public, private or semi-public.

As the population of towns expanded, the open spaces in and adjacent to them were built on, the commons and wasteland were enclosed, and most working people deprived of their recreation lands. The contribution of commons and wasteland to open space for recreation was an important one, although their use in that respect was not recognised by law.

### Commons and Wasteland

Common land is land that has never been cultivated or subject to agricultural improvement because its ownership is not complete and absolute. Most common land originated as wastelands of the manor, with ownership of the soil vested in the Lord of the Manor. Adjoining land-owners and their tenants had rights, such as digging turf, cutting gorse

and bracken, and grazing cattle and sheep, and those rights prevented the Lord of the Manor from enclosing, cultivating or building on the land unless he applied to do so by Act of Parliament. Whilst certain people acquired in the course of time a number of rights over particular commons, commons were not and are not public open spaces, and commoners' rights could not be used for sale or profit. With the growth of population, commons near large towns were used increasingly for recreation and the profit to those who had rights of common over them decreased as a result. Nevertheless, commons rights still existed in law but, although people used the commons for recreation, the law did not recognise that change of use or give sanction to the new users.<sup>7</sup>

The question of legal ownership and rights in law and the difference between these rights and those that have come about by custom and usage, is fundamental to understanding the role and significance of commons and wasteland in the context of expanding towns. In a community where there were commons or wasteland and people wanted to play, they would do so on that land whether stock was turned out onto it by commoners or not. Legal ownership was not important in the matter of play, which was readily reconcilable with the legitimate, i.e. traditional, uses of the commons, but when the land rose in value, then legal rights became important. From the legal point of view, all rights of common came from the grant or the permission of the Lord of the Manor. Commoners' rights could not be used for sale or profit and if enclosure took place commoners received no compensation.

The law locks up the man or woman  
Who steals the goose from off the Common,  
But lets the greater robber loose  
Who steals the Common from the goose.<sup>8</sup>

Nor was there any question of compensation for the loss of rights for games or walks. That point was recognised by those who held common field rights over the land surrounding Nottingham and used as part of their argument to prevent enclosure. If that land were enclosed, they argued, it would be built over and, as a result, working people would not be able to use it for recreation. Enclosure nevertheless took place in 1845.<sup>9</sup>

Between 1750 and 1850 enclosure by means of private Acts accelerated. In that period, Acts relating to waste alone, which could be subject to commons rights, dealt with the enclosure of 2,100,617 acres. In addition,

1. Though the  
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not for the  
people

some four and a half million acres was enclosed of which an unknown proportion represented common pasture.<sup>10</sup> Some of that enclosed land was ploughed up to add to the country's productive powers, others of it went to increase the private parks and game reserves of the Lords of the Manor. Some, like William Cobbett, questioned whether there was really a gain. Cobbett wrote of Horton Heath, a common of 150 acres;

The cottagers produced from their little bits, in food, for themselves, and in things to be sold at market, more than any neighbouring farm of 200 acres ... I learnt to hate a system that could lead English gentlemen to disregard matters like these! That could induce them to tear up 'wastes' and sweep away occupiers like those I have described! Wastes indeed! Give a dog an ill name. Was Horton Heath a waste? Was it a 'waste' when a hundred, perhaps, of healthy boys and girls were playing there of a Sunday, instead of creeping about covered with filth in the alleys of a town?<sup>11</sup>

The role of commons as a resource for recreation was not however widely appreciated and it was not until the SCPW gathered together evidence of the situation in the major towns that the extent of the problem was clearly identified.

#### The Select Committee on Public Walks

This committee was set up and chaired by R.A. Slaney, MP and it received evidence from twenty-five people including twelve Members of Parliament, three magistrates, one solicitor, two mayors, one warden of parish, and one clergyman. In certain instances, differences of opinion were presented but it was not the function of the Committee to evaluate those differences, only to record them. The Committee received evidence of the open space available in London and in those towns that they associated with the major manufacturing industries of the country: cotton, wool, metal and hardware. They were not therefore solely concerned with those centres where the factory system was most fully developed. In addition, they received evidence for towns such as Norwich and Shrewsbury that were neither associated with major mechanical industries nor centres of large population growth but had been <sup>and are still</sup> worsted and woollen centres. The Committee found that the greatest problems regarding access to open space for recreation occurred in the largest urban centres of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and London. The evidence for those centres will therefore be examined in greater detail than that presented for smaller towns.



Although the Committee restricted its examination to England and did not include Scotland or Wales, it did receive evidence of the condition of working people on the continent. The people there were found to be more healthy and more content due, in large part it was thought, to the existence of open spaces for recreation.<sup>12</sup> Public parks had opened on the Continent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Paris the royal parks and gardens were opened to the public as a result of the French Revolution. In Germany the Englischer Garten in München was commissioned by the Elector, Karl Theodor, in 1789 and laid out in 1807 by Ludwig von Skell, while at both Magdeburg and Frankfurt the disused town fortifications provided the opportunity for laying out gardens and promenades (as, indeed, they had in Dorchester).<sup>13</sup> Magdeburg's park was laid out by Peter Joseph Lenné, director of the Potsdam gardens, in 1824 "on the initiative of the municipality",<sup>14</sup> though it is not clear whether the park was owned by the municipality. At Mayence, the Anlage laid out along the banks of the Rhine was a public park

provided by the corporation of the city for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. It is free and open to all classes every day in the week. There are no dogs, or growling keepers at the gate - no surrounding walls coped with broken glass ... We in England might well take a lesson from the Germans in their efforts to bring recreation and innocent amusement within the reach of all classes.<sup>15</sup>

The contrast between the situation on the Continent and that of the major industrial and commercial centres of England was then made in the Report with evidence presented for the major towns.

### Manchester

Between 1820 and 1833, the amount of open space in and around Manchester had declined rapidly. Before 1820 there were many open spaces close to the centre of the town which everyone could use, such as St George's Fields, St Peter's Fields, Camp Field, Greenhays Field, Ardwick Green, and the Infirmary Gardens. Surrounding Manchester there were fine fields and an abundance of footpaths, and it was still possible to walk around the town in a circle "which would be seldom greater than a radius of two miles from the Exchange" and hardly ever meet a busy road or paved street. The foundation in 1826 of the Manchester Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths, to prevent them from being destroyed and built over, indicated how much these footpaths were prized.<sup>16</sup>

In Manchester the Committee received evidence that the open space available included the Infirmary Gardens (300 yards by 50 yards) which was surrounded by buildings, the Botanical Gardens which were two and a half miles from the centre of the town, and bowling greens and racquets courts attached to public houses. Richard Potter, MP, a leading member of the Manchester Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths, told the Committee of the large numbers of people who went by his house on their way to the racecourse, the only open space in the vicinity. He thought thousands passed by each week, particularly on Sunday mornings in the spring and summer and, since there were no race meetings on Sunday mornings, it would appear that they went for the fresh open air. Although the railway between Manchester and Liverpool and other places provided access to open space outside the town, Mark Philips, MP, in his evidence thought that this was not an adequate substitute for the provision of public walks close at hand.<sup>17</sup> The situation in Manchester was summed up by Dr J. P. Kay in a letter to the chairman, R. A. Slaney:

At present the entire labouring population of Manchester is without any season of recreation and is ignorant of all amusements, excepting that very small portion which frequents the theatre. Healthful exercise in the open air is seldom or never taken by the artisans of this town, and their health certainly suffers considerable depression from this deprivation. One reason of this state of the people is, that all the scenes of interest are remote from the town and that the walks which can be enjoyed by the poor are chiefly the turnpike roads, alternately dusty or muddy ... I need not<sup>18</sup> inform you how sad is our labouring population here.

Because the evidence to the Committee only mentioned open spaces available in Manchester without clarifying who was permitted to use them, the situation was in fact worse than that presented. For example, the Botanical and Horticultural Gardens, which covered sixteen acres, had opened in 1831 but they were semi-public spaces not open to the general public, only to subscribers.<sup>19</sup>

There is something inconsistent in the rules of an institution which, professing to be established for the enlightenment of our fellow-creatures, is yet forbidden ground for those who most require a participation in its refining influence. Once a year ... the Sunday school children, amounting to several thousands, are permitted to walk through these beautiful grounds; and let it be remembered that on such occasions, not a shrub or flower has been injured ...

During the remaining part of the year "the brazen gates are closed" except to annual subscribers, admitted by ballot.<sup>20</sup>

The Golf Club, which had opened in 1815, was also an example of semi-public open space.<sup>21</sup> The suggestions made to the Committee for suitable sites for public walks in Manchester included a site between the Botanic Gardens and the canal at Ardwick Green of 400 yards by 180 yards, and Kersal Moor, two and a half miles from the centre of the town.

### Liverpool

Criticisms of the lack of open space in Liverpool dated from the end of the eighteenth century.

The town of Liverpool affords no walks or amusements in its vicinity, commerce alone appears to engage the attention of its inhabitants, though there is a pretty terrace called St James' Walk commanding an extensive view ... Nothing now remains for the amusement of the inhabitants in the North part of the town but a sort of Terrace called Parade, which affords a kind of Mall and would be greatly improved by trees.<sup>22</sup>

But the Committee heard that Liverpool was one of the few towns that had retained some open space, although the provision was inadequate for the numbers of people involved. St James's Park, of three or four acres, had been created out of the refuse of a large stone quarry on the east side of the town about fifty years ago, but it was little used. Another walk of approximately half a mile, Prince's Parade, had been constructed on the west side of the town when the docks were made about fifteen years ago (c.1815). This was a favourite walk along the banks of the river and was not used by the gentry since it was two or three miles from the east side of the town where they lived.<sup>23</sup> On certain days, J. Ashton Yates, MP, said that he opened his walks along the banks of the Mersey to those members of the public who were prepared to make the journey of two and a half miles from the centre of the town and one mile from the outskirts. In the course of twenty years he had had no trouble from the public; there were no police on duty, only gardeners. Other places in Liverpool in which the public could walk, although they did not do so to any great extent, were the two cemeteries on the outskirts of the town, which were "planted very prettily and the public are allowed to walk in them very freely".<sup>24</sup>



The Botanical Gardens, which had been established in 1802, were about to be moved from the centre of the town but there was no intention in 1833 of opening the new gardens to the public. In Yates's opinion, the site of the Botanical Gardens was too limited and the trees too affected by the smoky atmosphere to provide an attractive site for a walk. To improve the provisions of open space in Liverpool, recommendations were made to the Committee that two new walks should be made, one to the north east of the town and the other to the south-east, but opinions on how funds should be raised to provide these were divided. Charles Horsfall, the mayor of Liverpool, did not think that there was such a demand for public walks that the public would be willing to raise the money by public subscription, whereas J. Ashton Yates thought that there would be many people willing to subscribe. Horsfall indeed doubted if there was a great need to provide parks in Liverpool because the waterfront and the easy access to Cheshire by boat across the River Mersey provided the means for recreation in the open air.<sup>25</sup>

### Birmingham

For Birmingham, the evidence given by the Rev. John Corrie seemed to indicate that, although there were no parks or common land, there were nevertheless considerable opportunities for people to have access to the open air. This he thought was because a fair proportion of the population of Birmingham had gardens of their own and also it was the custom of working men to rent gardens around the town. On these plots were little summerhouses and working men would spend their evenings and Sundays there with their families.<sup>26</sup> Among other recommendations made for public walks in Birmingham, Theodore Price, a magistrate, recommended two types of garden, one to be a place of amusement with a small entrance charge made, the other to be a garden with serpentine walks and shrubs.<sup>27</sup>

### London

In London the situation was rather different. The existence of the royal parks meant that those who lived on the west side of London were well served with open spaces. Hyde Park, which had originally been a hunting area, had been open to all since the seventeenth century. St James's Park was opened to the public by Charles II, who also formed Green Park. Green Park and Hyde Park were open to everyone, whereas St James's Park and Kensington Gardens were open to "all persons well behaved and properly

dressed".<sup>28</sup> Regent's Park was formed from crown lands when the lease fell in, in 1811, and part of it was open to the public. People living on the west side of London therefore had access to open space, but for those living on the east side, there was no public park between Regent's Park and the river except Highbury Barn. This was not public open space as either an admission charge was made or payment was made by taking refreshment.<sup>29</sup> London, unlike other major cities situated on rivers, such as Paris, Lyons or Florence, had not preserved a public riverside walk. Walks and terraces did exist near Lambeth Palace, near the Penitentiary, Adelphi and Somerset House, and those could all be extended at little cost and great benefit.<sup>30</sup> There was also a three mile walk by the Thames from Limehouse Reach to Blackwall, which was the only walk in that part of London. The fields at the back of the British Museum, which had once been used every night in the summer by at least one to two-hundred people had, with other open spaces, subsequently disappeared due to building and enclosure.

To improve the facilities for open space on the east side of London, three places were suggested to the Committee; these were Copenhagen Fields (50 acres), Hackney Downs, which were commons and lammas land,<sup>31</sup> and Bonners Fields. South of the Thames, Kennington Common (17 acres) was suggested. It could be improved if a public walk were laid out around its edge and that would not reduce the value of the pasturage there too much.<sup>32</sup>

### Other Towns

Among the other towns for which evidence was presented to the Committee, Walsall had twenty acres of lammas land which was suitable for making into a public ground or walk, while Leeds had two or three open spaces and some unenclosed commons such as Woodhouse Moor (60-90 acres), Holbeck Moor and Hunslett Moor.<sup>33</sup> In Bristol the people used the commons and downs for recreation, and Norwich, Nottingham and Shrewsbury all had some form of public walk, although they were generally inadequate for the needs of the inhabitants.<sup>34</sup>

The Committee established that little or no provision had been made for public walks and open spaces during the preceding half century when the great increase in the population of towns had taken place:



with a rapidly increasing population, lodged for the most part in narrow courts and confined streets, the means of occasional exercise and recreation in the fresh air are every day lessened, and inclosures take place and buildings spread themselves on every side.<sup>35</sup>

The major towns were all without "means of healthy exercise or cheerful amusement with their families, on their holidays or days of rest" and, in London, only in the west end was the provision of open spaces adequate.

The SCPW Report was the first official attempt to assess the provision of open space for recreation but the Committee was not the only body to concern itself with this matter, for the Utilitarians<sup>36</sup> had voiced their concern some five years earlier.

### The Utilitarians

John Arthur Roebuck, MP for Bath in 1832 and an active member of the Utilitarian Society, recognised that the enclosure of commons near large towns had resulted in a severe decline in the open space available for recreation. He saw the conditions under which the majority of the urban populations lived and realised that reform would not occur unless positive action was taken to control the growth of towns. If open space was to be retained for recreation then speculative builders must be prevented from building on all available space in a town and on the land surrounding it. To achieve this, action by Parliament would be necessary.

Roebuck put forward his ideas for town planning and development in a speech before the Utilitarian Debating Society in 1828: tree-lined boulevards, parks and lawns in the town, which would be open to the public and, surrounding the town, common land maintained either by the town authorities or the state for the benefit of the urban population. Those benefits would not only be in physical terms, they would also have a political dimension, for Francis Place and other Utilitarians thought that working people saw the nobility and gentry solely as enemies. Recognition and respect for class and social order had, they thought, been fostered in the past by the aristocracy "mixing" with the lower classes and, in doing so, they could "be judged of by speaking to the people ...".<sup>37</sup>

So the Utilitarians saw parks as places in which this contact could occur

and, as a result, social tensions would be reduced and social harmony promoted.

We must create a public trust and prevent by law if necessary, the rights of the common people from being swept away at the hand of the proprietor who would enclose the land around our towns for his future benefit, and the pseudo-builder who would cover it with ugliness.<sup>38</sup>

Each town, thought Roebuck, should have the authority to acquire land for parks and to preserve land around towns as the property of the town, to be used for the good of all the inhabitants. Yet, while he was advocating the need for open space for recreation, enclosures round industrial towns continued, hundreds of acres were being enclosed round such towns as Manchester, Birmingham and Coventry, and Bills to facilitate enclosure continued to be put before Parliament.

It is through an analysis of the benefits that parks might achieve that the attitudes of park promoters such as the Utilitarians and those that presented evidence to the SCPW become clearer.

### Benefits

The benefits of parks outlined by the Utilitarians were reiterated and amplified in the SCPW Report. They would "conduce to the comfort, health and content of the classes in question" and hence provide a safety valve. Indeed, the Committee argued that unless parks were provided, "great mischief must arise".<sup>39</sup> Thus their potential political role in diffusing class tensions was clearly perceived by the Committee.

Contact between the classes in the park would be one of the benefits, but here the Committee did not use Francis Place's argument that this would foster respect for class and social order among working people. They saw such contact in terms of pride, competition, and the effects on the country's economy. The cleanliness, neatness and appearance of working people would improve because

a man walking out with his family among his neighbours of different ranks, will naturally be desirous to be properly clothed, and that his wife and children should be also.<sup>40</sup>

This desire, the Committee noted, was similar to that which promoted

civilisation and industry, namely the competitive spirit and the spirit of pride. An industrious work force was best promoted by inducement and one of the most powerful inducements was the desire to improve the condition and comfort of the family. Hence, they argued, the provision of public walks would have a direct effect on the industry and economy of the country, by promoting the spirit of competitiveness. Moreover, if a small charge was made for the use of such facilities, then this would defray the expense to the public or individual in laying out the public walk. The Committee were not necessarily advocating free facilities. An additional benefit would lie in the effect on unemployment for, with the development of parks, work would be provided "in straightening of water courses and fences".<sup>41</sup>

The question of healthful exercise in the open air and the provision of recreation other than that provided by the public house was also clearly stated.

Were parks provided, recreation would be taken with avidity, and one result would be a better use of the Sunday, and a substitution of innocent amusement at all times for the debasing pleasures now in vogue.<sup>42</sup>

The various benefits identified by the park promoters revealed their attitudes towards the potential park users. Parks would provide access to open space and fresh air denied to the inhabitants of the expanding towns and cities, unless they had the time and resources to travel beyond their confines. Physical health would improve as a result of exercise in the fresh air, but parks would not only result in physical benefits, social and political benefits were also identified. Respect for class and social order would, it was thought, be fostered among working people as a result of the contact between the classes which would occur in the parks. Moreover, by promoting the "comfort, health and content" of the working classes, parks would provide a safety valve which would diffuse class tensions.

Fears of social unrest and the need for social control had been evident in the aftermath of the French Revolution in the 1790s, at Peterloo (1819) and in the Chartist movement particularly in the periods 1816-20 and 1830-32. Indeed, that period has been seen as "the most prolonged period



of recurrent social disorder in modern British history".<sup>43</sup> In E.P. Thompson's judgement, it was in the period between the French Revolution and the Great Reform Bill of 1832 that "English working people came to feel an identity of interests~~s~~as between themselves and as against their rulers and employers".<sup>44</sup> This increasing differentiation of interests between workers and employers marked the development of the polarised class system. The evidence of the SCPW and of the Utilitarians shows that they understood that the creation and maintenance of parks could form part of the political process by promoting social harmony and social control. The other main benefit commonly perceived concerned the ways in which the urban working class spent their recreation and the potential of parks to provide an alternative attraction, particularly to the public house. The changing pattern of recreation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries formed part of the background to these attitudes.

#### Changing Pattern of Recreation

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, holidays were still popularly linked with religious holy days and involved fairs, feasts, drinking and dancing. As trading centres, fairs called for special laws governing trade and hence the attention of authority was directed towards that aspect of their activity, as well as towards problems associated with the large numbers of people attending them. Until the early years of the nineteenth century, the main emphasis of fairs was on serious trading but, although that role declined in the 1820s and 1830s,<sup>45</sup> their function in attracting large numbers of people remained and, with it, the problem of public order.<sup>46</sup> In the period up to the early nineteenth century, most members of the community attended fairs but, from the end of the eighteenth century, the breakup of such traditional recreations shared by different social classes occurred.<sup>47</sup> An example of this could be seen in Bradford where the Bishop Blaise celebration had traditionally involved the whole community, with wool-sorters, combers, dyers and worsted manufacturers, who processed through the town and feasted together. In 1825 the weavers and wool combers were involved in a bitter strike and the celebration of that year was to prove the last.<sup>48</sup>

The breakup of shared traditional recreations indicated that the increasing

class divisions of society were reflected in recreation as well as in work. With the growth and isolation of the working class, particularly in the large industrial centres of the north, the "problem" of working class recreation attracted increasing attention.<sup>49</sup> Certain recreations of the working population could be controlled, particularly if they were associated with public events such as fairs, but other more private types of occasion could not. The main social focus of these more private recreations was the public house, which provided a range of activities in addition to drinking. The Star Inn at Bolton, for example, had a museum attached to it as well as a music hall.<sup>50</sup> In Manchester, according to the Report of the Select Committee on Public Houses, almost the only public amusement for artisans and millhands was to be found in the music saloons, the three largest being the Casino, The Victoria Saloon and the Polytechnic. The entry fee was returned in the form of refreshment and the entertainment included clog and grotesque dancing, juggling and singing. At the Casino an estimated attendance was 15,000 persons weekly, of whom a great number were under fifteen years old.<sup>51</sup>

Public houses and shops were the local facilities that were provided first as towns expanded and, in Birmingham by 1848 there was one public house for every 166 inhabitants.<sup>52</sup> Public houses were the only places for recreation on Sunday and John Finch, an iron merchant of Liverpool, testified to the Select Committee on Drunkenness:

It is a very absurd thing that on Sunday, especially in Liverpool, all the public houses are open and all the public walks, cemeteries, zoological gardens, and botanical gardens where people might amuse themselves innocently, are closed.<sup>53</sup>

It is worth considering why an employer should show such concern for drunkenness and whether that concern was related to the preference for a sober, diligent workforce. Public houses were patronised almost solely by working people. They provided a meeting place for the early trades unions and they tended to be seen by the ruling class as centres of anti-social, if not revolutionary, activity.<sup>54</sup> Because they were not frequented by "neighbours of different ranks", there were few opportunities for social contact or for influencing the working people who frequented them.<sup>55</sup> Parks could fulfil that role by providing the opportunity for social contact and influence but, if they were to act as places of recreation for working people, this implied that they should be located

/over



near to working class districts. Clear recognition of this could be seen in the recommendations of the SCPW for parks to serve the populations of the east end and south of London, but it was not clearly stated in the recommendations made for other centres.

### Recommendations of the Committee

In order to secure public open spaces the Committee recommended that the legal difficulties to their provision be removed. As the law then stood, land could not be bequeathed for public use, and negotiations involving entailed and corporate property were extremely complex. The Committee also recommended that, for any town above a certain population size, every future Act for making a turnpike road or canal should in future contain a clause preserving land on either side, up to a breadth of one hundred yards, from being built on. Such land could then be used to provide a spacious walk with two rows of trees and seats. This scheme would not only have physical and social advantages but it would also increase the value of the adjacent land. To achieve its recommendations, the Committee advocated that the necessary funds be obtained by a public grant or from voluntary subscriptions, or by a low rate, or by Government assistance, or by a combination of these methods.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

The SCPW Report provided the first general survey of the open spaces available for public use in the major industrial and commercial centres of England and drew Parliament's attention to the existence of the problem. Although it did not dwell on the effects of enclosure, it did in effect reinforce Roebuck's work in that area. The identification of the need for parks was associated with such indirect factors as the potential social, moral and political benefits, and with the direct physical factors of population and urban growth and their effect on open space for recreation as commons and wasteland were enclosed. The severest problems were found in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and London, which had the largest populations, but the Report concluded that all the major urban centres were without sufficient open space for recreation.

## Notes and References

- 1 Select Committee on Public Walks (SCPW), B.P.P. Vol. XV, 1833, Cmnd 448
- 2 Ashworth, op.cit. Chapter 1
- 3 A town was defined in 1808 as a municipal corporation having its own boundaries and with more complete and independent local government than a village. A city was associated with episcopal or royal seats, or the title could be conferred on important towns by royal authority. OED
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	<u>Population in thousands</u>		
	<u>1801</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1881</u>
Bristol	61	137	207
Birmingham	71	233	401
Leeds	53	172	309
Liverpool	82	376	553
Manchester and Salford	89	367	517
Sheffield	46	135	285
London	1,088	2,491	3,881

### Resorts

Bath	33	54	52
Blackpool	-	3	14
Brighton	7	66	108
Southend-on-Sea	-	-	8

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FIRST MUNICIPAL PARK AND THE FIRST PHASE OF PARK DEVELOPMENT

1800 - 1833

In order to secure public open space in the future, the SCPW made certain recommendations which it presented to Parliament. Before examining the effect of these recommendations, an analysis will be made of those new parks that were developed in the period 1800-1833 preceding the SCPW Report. To date, three parks have been identified but only one of them, Regent's Park, London, was mentioned by the SCPW. The SCPW did not distinguish clearly between public open space that was freely accessible and semi-public space to which there was restricted access nor did it differentiate between various types of public park. An examination of these three new parks will make it possible to distinguish between various types of public park and, in so doing, to identify the first municipal park.

The main factors influencing these three developments will be identified as will the extent to which they involved action by central or local government. Each park was seen as contributing to particular aspects of the urban environment through its design and through its relationship to its immediate surroundings. The extent to which each was seen in economic, social or political terms will be analysed.

#### Regent's Park

Regent's Park was a royal park formed from Marylebone Park when the leaseholds reverted to the crown in 1803 and 1811 respectively. The Surveyor-General of Land Revenue, John Fordyce, suggested that one person should be in charge of the whole development in order that a consistent plan be achieved. The choice of John Nash and the plans put forward by him for the development of the whole area are well known.<sup>1</sup> Because of its royal status, its location, its size (350 acres) and the fact that it was designed by the Prince Regent's favourite architect, Regent's Park proved to be very influential on later urban park design. It will therefore be examined in some detail in order to establish which factors were the most significant.

The project consisted of laying out the park and developing residential sites around it. In Nash's original plan, the Regent's Park development offered a large income for a small outlay. For an investment of £12,115 it was estimated that the annual income from ground rents would be £59,429 and, when the 99-year leases fell in, the capital value would then be £187,724. However, profits from the development of the area were very slow in coming in and costs were very much higher than those envisaged by Nash. By 1816 more than £53,000 had been spent with very little in the way of return. Work on the roads and plantations of Regent's Park had begun in 1811 but by 1816 still no villa or terrace sites had been let. Partly this was due to the uncertainties engendered by the wars with France, and it was not until 1819 that the building industry recovered. This recovery and the backing of Nash by the wealthy builder James Burton marked the change in the fortunes of the Regent's Park development after this date. By 1823 every site was let and the park was virtually completed within seven years.

In 1826 the Commissioners decided to call a halt to the building programme in the park. Nash had intended that fifty villas should be built in the park but this had been reduced to twenty-six and, in 1826, was further reduced to eight. The Treasury's revenue from the ground rents at this time was £13,024.<sup>2</sup> Public money had been spent only on the roads, lodges, open spaces and railings, all the rest of the buildings associated with Regent's Park development were financed by private builders or speculators: the builder or developer would take a site and erect a terrace on it, according to Nash's designs for the facades, paying the Commissioners a peppercorn rent. Leases were granted for 99 years, and the builder or developer hoped to sell these before the building was complete, if possible. The two people who invested most in the development of the park were John Nash and James Burton.<sup>3</sup>

John Fordyce had made it clear that one of the main concerns in the development of Regent's Park was to increase the value of the building land. Although these increases in value did not take place as rapidly as first envisaged, it was certainly clear by 1826 that this aim had been achieved. The economic benefits to property values that the presence of a park could bring was therefore one of the important lessons of the Regent's Park project. These economic benefits accrued

to both the crown and to the developers.

Figure 1 shows the plan of Regent's Park with the terraces and villas built, or in progress, in 1826. The main features of the interior layout are the irregularly shaped lake and the informal planting. To the north the park is bounded by the canal, while the other sides are bounded by terraces of houses. In the park the villas were each surrounded by trees and shrubs so that no villa would be visible to any other. In this way, it would appear that each villa was alone in the park and that the whole park "belonged" to each villa. Here Nash was applying the theory of appropriation, or apparent extent, which Humphry Repton, Nash's erstwhile partner,<sup>4</sup> considered to be one of the major sources of pleasure in landscape gardening.<sup>5</sup> "The first essential of greatness in a place, is the appearance of united and uninterrupted property ...".<sup>6</sup> The theory of appropriation was applicable not only to the houses or villas in the park, but also to the terraces surrounding it, for the park appeared to be an extension of the gardens immediately adjoining the terraces. It also had a strong economic justification, for the presence of the park enhanced the surroundings to the houses in or adjacent to it. This enhancement showed itself in the increased prices that could be obtained for these houses or the sites on which they were to be built.

### Use of Regent's Park

The SCPW had drawn attention to the fact that Regent's Park and the royal parks of Hyde Park, St James's Park and Kensington Gardens provided access to open air for those living on the western side of the city. In the case of Regent's Park, the degree of access changed gradually during the first half of the nineteenth century. At first only the roads in the park were open to the public, and a contemporary writer noted that the park was bright and animated "at the fashionable airing hours of the day".<sup>7</sup> The type of user is implicit in that phrase. Opposite Hanover Terrace "a small gate opens onto the enclosed park" for those permitted access and

... the whole enclosed area of the Park beaming with verdant hues of green and enamelled with little clumps, and belts, and elsewhere variegated or spotted with the endless forms of simple trees are ... the picture of healthy vegetation, although in the environs of a smoky city, crammed with a million of human beings.<sup>8</sup>



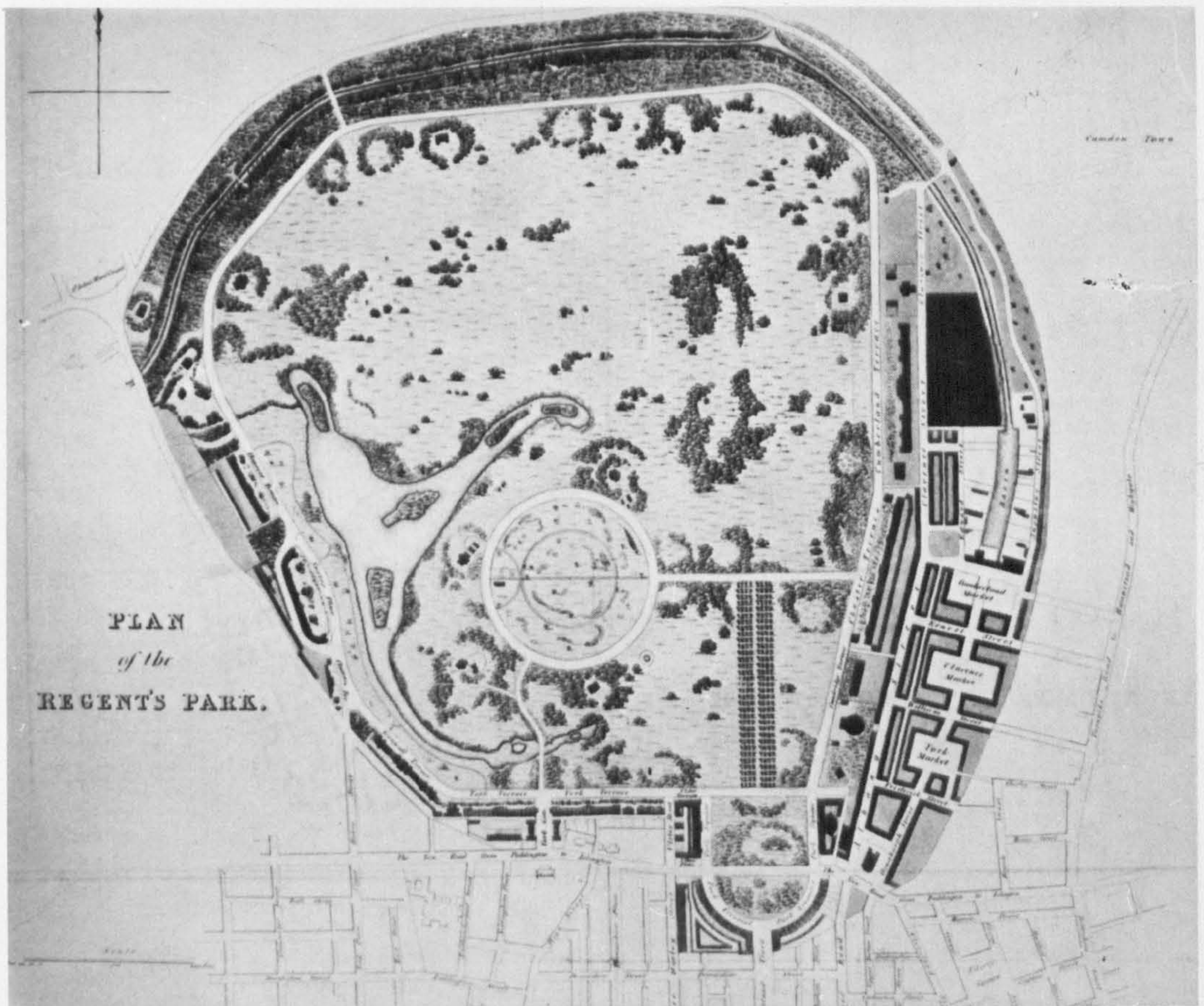


Figure 1 J. Nash, Regent's Park, plan, 1826  
 (Fifth Report, Commissioners of Woods, Forests and  
 Land Revenues, 1826)



Thus the contrast is made between the healthy environment of the park and that of its surroundings.

In 1823 the German landscape gardener Joseph Lenné visited England for three months and, in the course of his travels, visited the public parks of London, including Regent's Park. He thought that they were all inferior in every way to those on the continent and apparently more intended for the grazing of cattle than the enjoyment of man. To enjoy the parks of London

it is necessary to be a man of fortune, and take exercise on horse back or in a carriage, for excepting in St James's Park and Kensington Gardens, there is neither a seat nor a shelter for the pedestrian.<sup>9</sup>

Regent's Park, he thought, was particularly deficient in that respect, lacking not only seats and shelter but also places of refreshment and amusement. Lenné also noticed the fences surrounding most parks and squares in London and contrasted these with the unfenced public parks in Germany. Gradually various sections of Regent's Park were opened to the public. In 1835 the eastern side of the park and a strip next to the canal, forming in all about eighty-eight acres, were opened and, in 1841, another ninety-two acres were opened. The restricted areas at that date were the surroundings to the villas, a strip of land in front of the southern terraces and the grounds of the Royal Botanic Society (founded 1838), the Toxophilite Society and the Zoological Society (founded 1824).<sup>10</sup>

The main activities in those parts of the park that were freely open to the public were walking, riding and driving in carriages. It was not until c.1850 that a gymnasium was opened in the corner of Regent's Park nearest Primrose Hill. In the summer this was crowded with youths and boys.

A person who seems to have been an old soldier acted as superintendent : before dark the ropes and poles were taken down, and the company soon dispersed.<sup>11</sup>

Regent's Park only gradually became a park that was freely accessible to the public, and it was not until it became so that it could really qualify as a public park. It was initiated as a royal park and it remains a royal park to this day. Its importance to later urban park developments lay in the economic lessons that could be learnt from the

development of a park combined with housing, and in its successful adoption of some of Repton's principles of landscape gardening, particularly that of appropriation. In the relationship of the park to its urban surroundings, the contrast of an area of healthy green vegetation to the smoky surroundings was evident. The terraces immediately adjacent to the park were the obvious beneficiaries and the developers recognised that fact.

### St James's Park

In 1828 John Nash designed St James's Park and it was this park, according to G.F. Chadwick, that "may therefore be regarded as the first English public park".<sup>12</sup> Like the example of Regent's Park, St James's Park illustrates some of the problems associated with the use of the term public park. Because the main emphasis of Chadwick's work was on the design and layout of the urban park rather than on its use and accessibility, he identified the new design by Nash as a new park. However, the site had previously been used by the public and it had been fully accessible as a park since the time of Charles II: both Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn referred to it.<sup>13</sup> But because St James's Park was not laid out until 1828, Chadwick did not consider its use as a public park prior to Nash's design. The fact that it was designed by Nash in 1828 did not, however, alter its status and accessibility, although it undoubtedly made it a more pleasant place to visit. Because this study is concerned with use as well as design and layout, the former use of the site could not be ignored, and it is on this basis of use that Chadwick's claim for it to be the "first English public park" is disputed. Like Regent's Park, St James's Park was a royal park and remains so to this day.

### Victoria Park, Bath

The second new park to be formed in this period was Victoria Park, Bath, 1830. The main reasons behind its development appear to have been economic ones, although this economic justification took a very different form from that of Regent's Park. Bath was a spa, and two tradesmen of the city, J. Davies and T. B. Coward, wanted "to make Bath a place of summer residence as well as of winter resort".<sup>14</sup> There was apparently a lack of shady walks and drives in the town and a park could remedy this omission.

The choice of site was the freeman's estate, which were common fields belonging to the freemen of Bath and lying to the south west of the city. This estate had been the subject of:

"trespass-paths" ... which in consequence so much depreciated (it) in value that hints were thrown out as to the possibility of its being let for building.<sup>15</sup>

The proximity of this site to the city and the fact that the "trespass-paths" were in any case diminishing the value to those who held common rights, related directly to the problems of commons and wastelands identified in the previous chapter. While it might have appeared that letting the land for building would have been a more remunerative operation, that would apparently not have been the case in the economic climate of the time, for there was at that period such:

stagnation of trade that one third of the houses in Bath were uninhabited, and in some of the best streets two or three good shops together were to be let.

The park was therefore seen as one way of adding to the attractions of the spa. Ten acres were laid out in 1830 at a cost of £7,000-£8,000, this sum being raised by subscription. In addition, the Corporation gave £100 towards the initial outlay and agreed to pay a sum of £100 per annum for expenses. This sum was paid annually until the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835<sup>16</sup> made such payments illegal. The Corporation also erected "a pretty farmhouse" which was gothic in style (Figure 2, No. 3). The layout of the park at this early date was extremely simple, consisting mainly of a drive and belt of trees (25,000 were planted) around the periphery of the site, with various walks crossing the park. The park was open "to all classes, as none are excluded from participating in its benefits". Rent, however, continued to be paid for the site of the park.<sup>17</sup> It would therefore appear that it was a public park but it was certainly not a municipal park for the land was not owned by the Corporation of Bath. This park was also the first, so far identified, to be named Victoria Park for "very opportunely for the committee ... her present Majesty, then the youthful Princess Victoria ..." arrived in Bath in October 1830 with HRH Duchess of Kent and they agreed both to open the park and to name it "The Royal Victoria Park".<sup>18</sup>



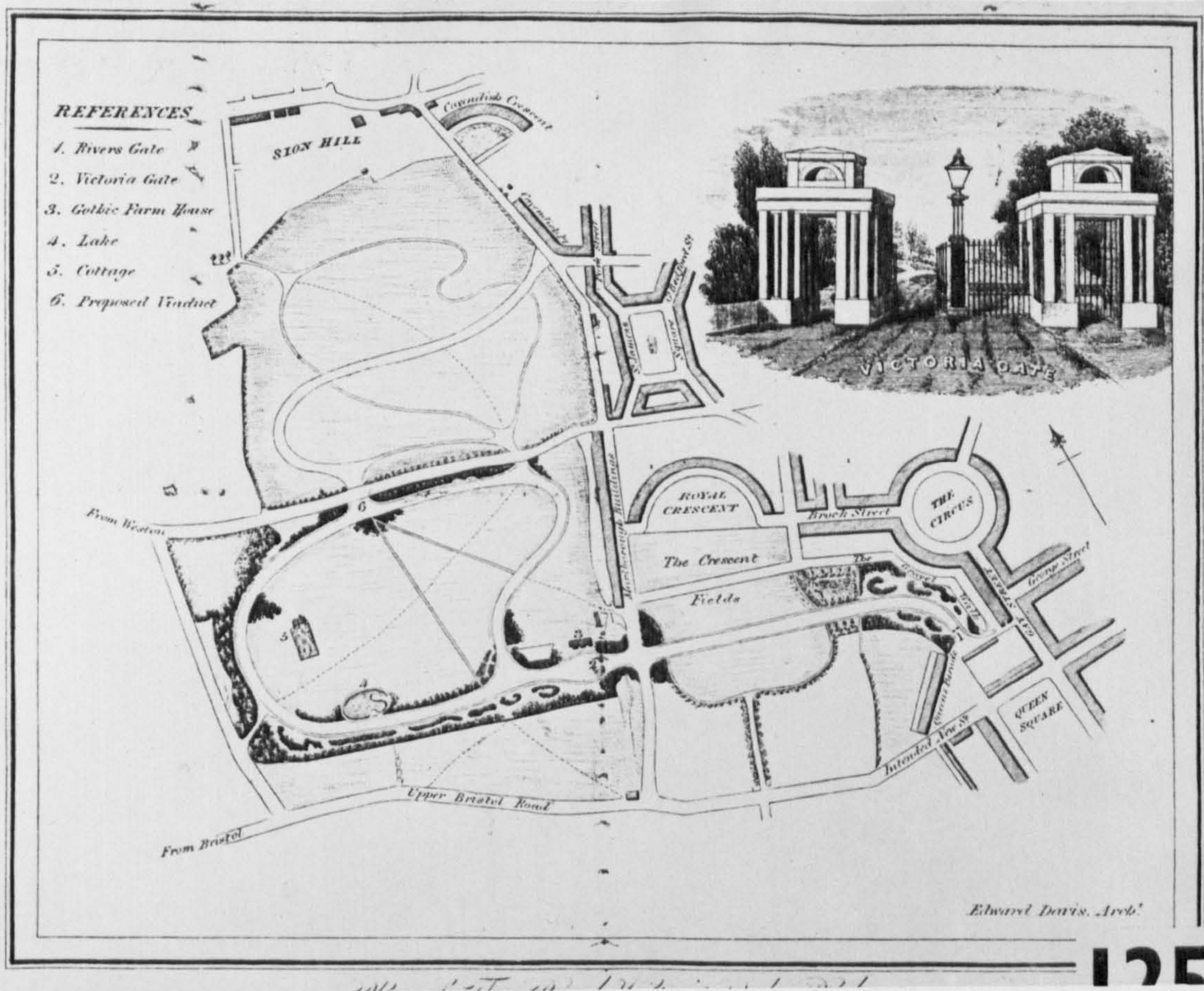


Figure 2 Victoria Park, Bath, c.1831 (Bath Reference Library)

The strong contrast between the neo-classical entrance at the Victoria Gate and the gothic farmhouse just inside (No. 3) accorded with picturesque concern with variety.



Victoria Park illustrated the role of the park in providing an attraction for visitors, thereby strengthening the economic base of the spa. Housing was not included in and around the park, as at Regent's Park, and the reasons why that aspect of the economics of park development was not pursued was quite clear.

#### Moor Park, Preston

The third park to be formed in the period up to 1833 was at Preston. In 1833 Preston Chronicle published an article entitled "The Intended Inclosure and Improvement of Preston Moor".<sup>19</sup> The Moor lay to the north of the town and was in a "neglected and unprofitable condition". By enclosure it "shall be so improved and appropriated as to become every way serviceable to the community", a by no means unusual way of justifying enclosure. However, the enclosure of Preston Moor differed from the majority of other enclosures in that it was undertaken by the Borough Council, with the stated intention of providing a convenient place for the recreation of the inhabitants of Preston and of benefitting the community financially. There were thus certain close similarities between its action and that at Bath.

The effective date for the enclosure was an Order in Council of Preston Borough Council, dated 29 November 1833. The Council claimed that, as various Royal Charters in the Middle Ages had granted the moor to the burgesses collectively, then the Council, acting as a body representing the burgesses, was entitled to make bye-laws controlling the moor. As it had never been common land available for use by anyone except the burgesses, there was no necessity for an Act of Parliament to enclose it. There were some objections to this line of reasoning, but the decision of the Council was not overturned.<sup>20</sup>

Part of the moor was to be laid out in public walks and drives and part of it "if not the whole of the remainder will be made productive of revenue to be devoted to the general improvement of the town". The few burgesses who had rights of pasturage on the moor might not find the new arrangements altogether satisfactory, as their profits would be reduced, but the poor freemen who had never enjoyed such advantages and the rest of the townsmen would find that the new arrangement gave them a "pleasing source of recreation, and the whole community would benefit from the

revenues arising from the improved occupation of the land". The author of the article was well aware of the Report of the Select Committee on Public Walks for

... it was only a few months ago, when the subject of public walks was before parliament that we suggested a ride or promenade along the southern extremity, similar to that which forms part of the present design.

The article included a plan (Figure 3) of the intended improvements to the moor which showed the lines of roads "to be laid out in a tasteful manner, so as to form an agreeable resort for pedestrians, as well as riders". At each of the four entrances, gateways would be indented from the high road in segments of circles, these would be planted with ornamental trees and shrubs; the rides would also be planted with trees on either side so as to form a continuous grove. Towards the centre of the moor there would be a broad gravel way suitable for carriages, and a green pasture of one hundred acres which would support a larger number of cattle than the moor of 240 acres in its present state. The cattle would be contained by a ha-ha and the whole area would thereby be laid out to view. A pond would be necessary for watering the cattle as well as forming "a pleasing adjunct in the scenery". To the north, west and south of the moor a number of villas or

neat and fancy cottages may be expected to spring up on the sites which will be more desirable in consequence of the whole area forming the centre of the Moor, being left permanently open.

Until the leases were let, this land would be cultivated as fields or gardens. On the east side of the Moor an area of about twenty acres would remain in the hands of the Council so that it could be used in the future as a public cemetery or botanic garden.<sup>21</sup>

The moor was enclosed by the Council in 1834 and, the following year, a plan of Moor Park was published by P. Park, surveyor, dated February 1835 showing in greater detail the layout of roads and the parts of the enclosure that were intended for sale (Figure 4). From this plan it is evident that the concepts of appropriation were clearly understood, and parallels can be drawn in this area between the development of Regent's Park and that of Moor Park. Moor Park (100 acres) was acquired and maintained by the local government of Preston and was freely accessible



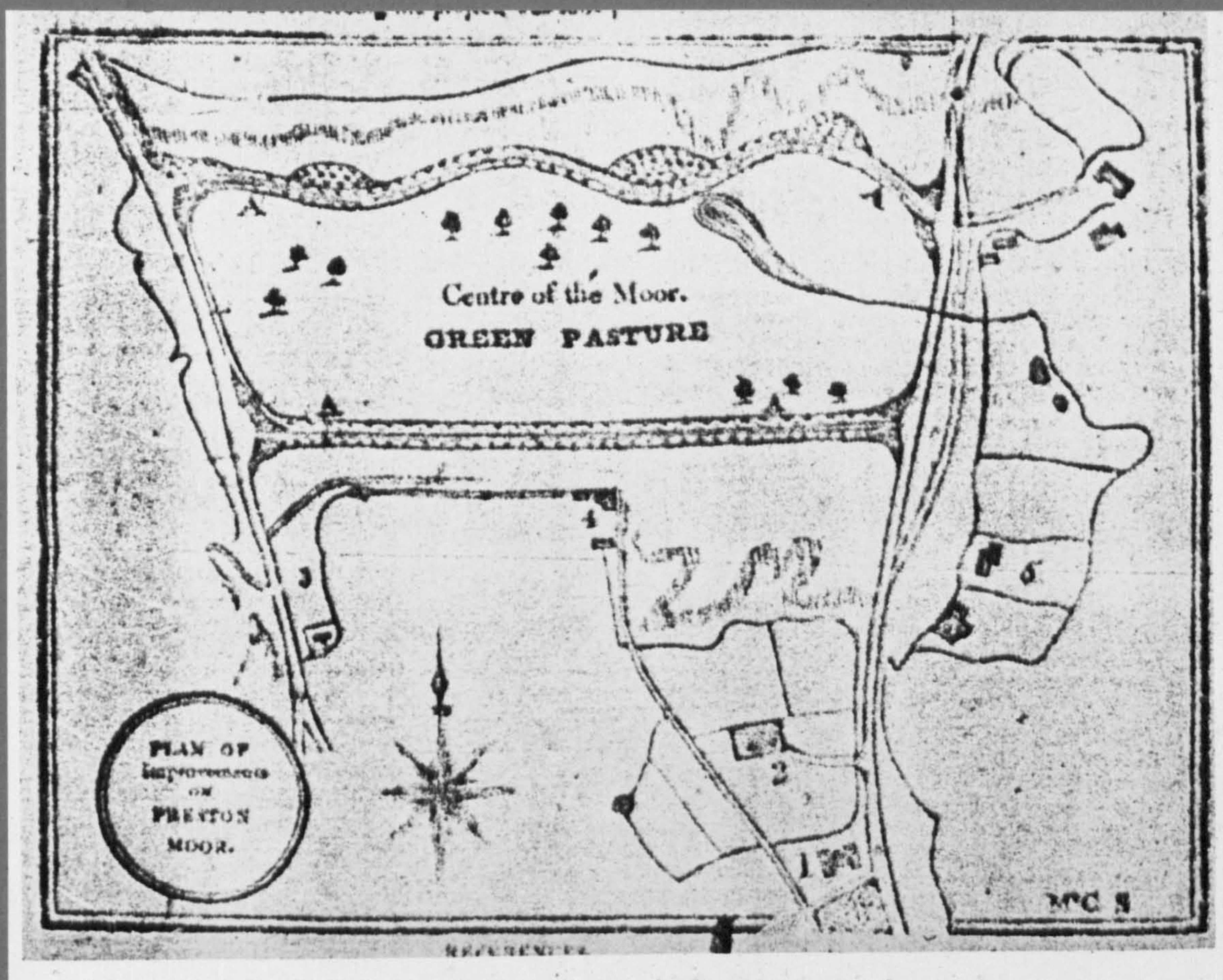


Figure 3 Intended improvements to Preston Moor, 1835  
(Preston Chronicle, 28 September 1833)

- 1 House of Recovery
- 2 Work House
- 3 Gallows Hill and Pin-fold (sic)
- 4 Mr Shaw's Farm
- 5 Farm and Buildings



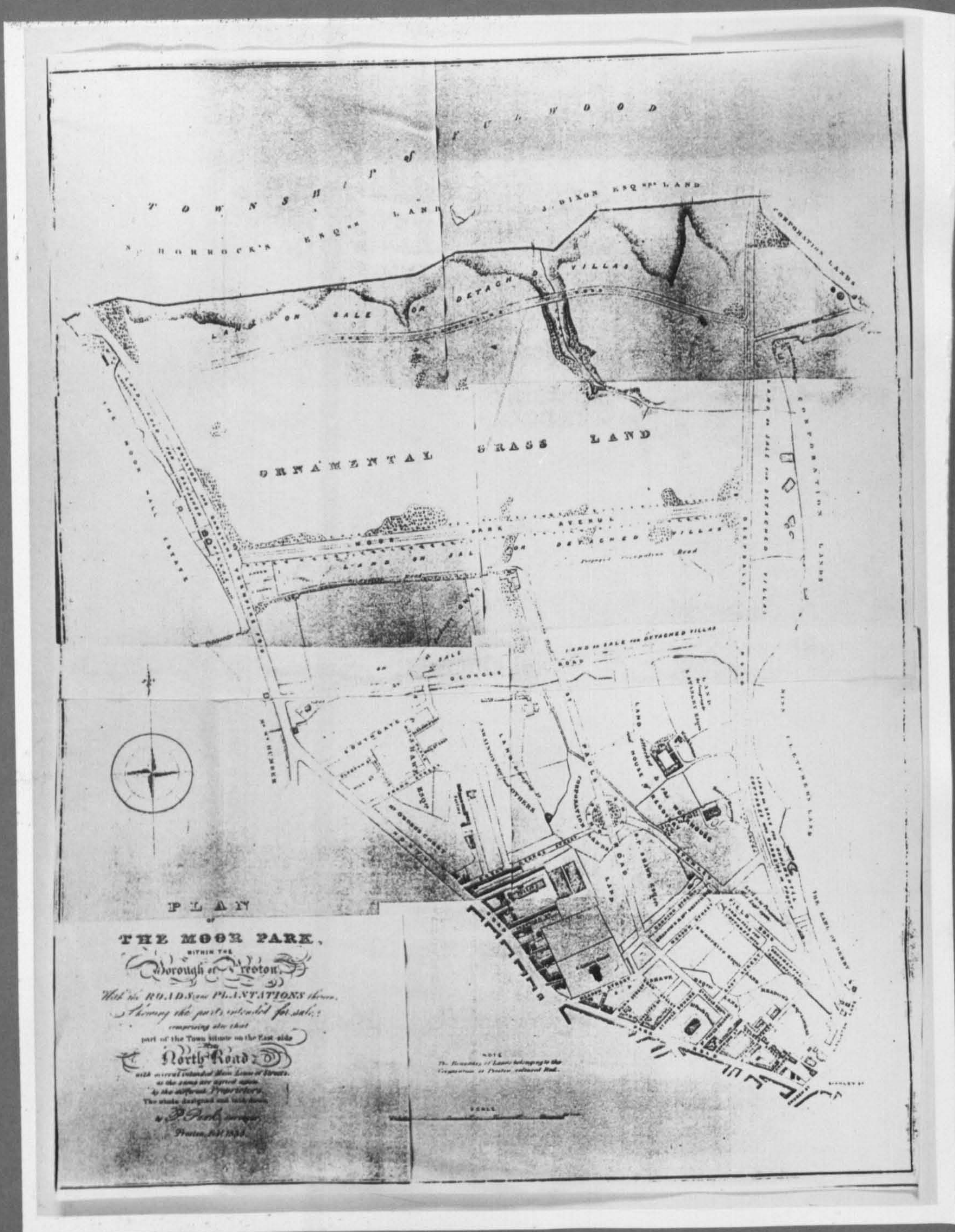


Figure 4 Moor Park, Preston 1835 (Central Library, Preston)



at all times to the public. By 1835 walks, rides and drives had been laid out, Moor Park Avenue on the south side had been planted, and a road had been built on the north side to form a boundary, the serpentine walk had been formed and two lodges built on the south and west approaches. The lodge on the north side was built in the following year, 1836.<sup>22</sup> The design of Moor Park in 1834-6 was not very sophisticated, but the paths, roads, open space and lake allowed "a pleasing source of recreation" which included walking, riding, driving and playing various games. In intention, in use, and in today's understanding of the term park, it would therefore appear that it should be considered to be a municipal park and possibly the first one.

There are, however, differences of opinion about whether Moor Park should qualify as the first municipal park, which concern the degree to which it was laid out in 1834. According to G.F. Chadwick, Moor Park

remained as a rather rough heather moor until 1834 when it was enclosed by the Corporation, but still remained accessible for public use. A start was made on its embellishment ... had the Corporation proceeded further, there is no doubt that Moor Park<sub>23</sub> would rank as the first really public park.

As in the example of St James's Park, it is the degree of embellishment that Chadwick takes as the criterion for deciding when an open space qualified as a public park rather than the question of use, and this reflected the main concern of his work on the urban park. Since this study of the municipal park is concerned with use as well as with design, the conclusions are inevitably likely to be somewhat different.

The question of the terminology used in the period of this study is also by no means straightforward. The SCPW and those who presented evidence to them did not always distinguish clearly between various types of garden, park and walk, but the use of the term public walk in their Report did not imply that they were only concerned with the activity of walking. Many references were made to the need for facilities for exercise, particularly for young people, and the term public walk as it was used in the SCPW Report could imply space for such exercise as well as for walking:

it is by no means necessary that such a Walk

be immediately contiguous to the Town ... One or two dry fields by the side of a Turnpike Road, planted along the margin, and having a broad walk round them, would often be sufficient.<sup>24</sup>

The implication was that the fields might be used for various sports and games. If the various reports that made reference to Moor Park in the two decades following its opening are examined, the question of the terminology used to discuss parks and walks in that period becomes clearer. The First Report on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1844, found that Preston was "favourably circumstanced as regards open and convenient places for exercise and recreation". Moor Park, 200 acres, provided "walks, rides and drives over well-drained soil" to the north of the town, and Preston Marsh, 30 acres, to the west of the town also belonged to the Council and was "much resorted to for recreation".<sup>25</sup> However, in the Second Report of 1845, reference was made to "parks and public walks worthy of the name" which implied that by that date qualitative judgements were being made.

In nothing, perhaps, are the large towns of Lancashire so generally deficient as in public parks for the recreation of the working classes. With the exception of Preston, none of the large towns has parks or public walks worthy of the name.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, in view of this Report, Preston's open spaces certainly qualified as public parks.

Neither of the Reports of 1844 or 1845 differentiated clearly between public walks and public parks, and used the terms interchangeably. The Select Committee on Public Houses, reporting in 1853, was much clearer on the question of terminology. It reported that Preston had no places of public resort such as museums or gardens open to the public, but it was in the process of preparing them, and "The Moor has been laid out in wide walks".<sup>27</sup> Thus in the terminology of 1853, Moor Park was considered to be a public walk rather than a park. It was not until it was fully laid out in 1862-5 by Edward Milner that it was considered to be a park, a view shared by G. F. Chadwick. The connotations of the word park and walk vary considerably in this period but, in 1834, when the Council of Preston gave Moor Park its name, they were quite clear that it should function as a place for the recreation of the community.

## Conclusion

Despite the weak state of local government in the period 1800-33, the success of Bath and Preston illustrated that it was possible to acquire open spaces for parks. It is, however, important to note that in neither case did the local authority apply to Parliament for an Act of Enclosure to do so, although the reasoning presented by Preston against making such an application was not completely accepted by all those involved. In this period, most proposed town improvements, which included open space for recreation, necessitated application to Parliament by each individual town, which was a lengthy and costly process. Recognition of these legal difficulties and the need for action to overcome them formed part of the recommendations of the SCPW.

An examination of the three parks developed in the period 1800-1833 has made it possible to begin to identify the various types of park to which the term public park was applied. Regent's Park was and is a royal park to which the public had gradually increasing access. Victoria Park, Bath was a public park rented by the Corporation of Bath and therefore not wholly owned by them. While there appeared to be no restriction on access, the lease would have been for a specific number of years and, after its termination, the use of the land for recreation could not be assured. It was only at Moor Park, Preston that the unalienable right of access of the public was assured, and that park is the first municipal park so far identified.

The main factors influencing the development of Regent's Park, Victoria Park, Bath and Moor Park, Preston were predominantly economic ones. At Regent's Park the increase in land values due to the presence of the park was a significant factor in the decision to develop the site in the first place. At Moor Park, it was evident that a similar process was envisaged by means of the "improved occupation of the land". At Bath, the economic benefits took a less direct form but were nevertheless still evident, for it was thought that the new park would add to the amenities of the resort and thereby encourage visitors.

The benefits that a park would bring to the community were considered both at Preston and Bath but, in both instances, those benefits were seen mainly in economic terms. The parks were for the use of all members of the



community but no evidence has been found to indicate whether their location near to working class districts was a factor. The writer of the article on the proposal to enclose Preston Moor implied that there was a connection between the proposed improvement of a ride or walk along the southern part of the moor and the SCPW Report, for it was while the subject of public walks was before Parliament that this improvement was suggested. However, it is not clear whether the action of the Preston Council to enclose the moor was directly influenced by the SCPW Report. The SCPW clearly identified the potential social and political roles of parks but no evidence of an awareness of this has been found in connection with the three parks examined here. This would imply that that aspect of the role of parks was not significant in the context of these particular parks. An examination of the parks developed in the decades following the publication of the SCPW Report will make it possible to identify the main factors influencing later developments and to evaluate the effectiveness of the SCPW recommendations.

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- 4 According to Summerson, J. Architecture in Britain 1530-1830, op.cit. p.47, the partnership between Repton and Nash lasted from 1795 to 1802, but K. Laurie dated the break from c.1800 (Carter, G., Goode, P. and Laurie, K. Humphry Repton Landscape Gardener 1752-1818, Norwich, 1982 p.75
- 5 For Humphry Repton's theories of landscape gardening, see Appendix I
- 6 Loudon, J.C. The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphry Repton Esq., London, 1840. Reprinted 1969, p.92
- 7 Anon. A Picturesque Guide to the Regent's Park, London, 1829, p.8
- 8 Ibid. p.17
- 9 Loudon, J.C. The Gardeners' Magazine, Vol. 1, 1826. Loudon reprinted extracts from an article by Lenné entitled "General Remarks on British Parks and Gardens", which had appeared in Transactions of the Prussian Gardening Society, Vol. 1, adding his own comments.
- 10 Saunders, op.cit. pp.53, 146-7
- 11 "The Struggling Classes, Public Playgrounds", The Builder, Vol. 16, No. 800, 5 June 1858, p.385
- 12 Chadwick, op.cit. p.34
- 13 Lang, S. "St James's Park", Architectural Review, Vol. 110, November 1951, p.295
- 14 Anon. History of the Royal Victoria Park, Bath, Bath, c.1872, p.2
- 15 Ibid. pp.3-4 The formation of the park required the permission of the owner of the adjacent Crescent Fields, Lady Rivers, and the consent of the freemen.
- 16 15 & 16 Will. IV, c.76
- 17 Anon. History of the Royal Victoria Park, Bath, op.cit. pp.3-4. c.1872 the rent paid was £153 p.a. to the Rivers family and £77.8s to the freemen. In addition, there were management expenses which brought the annual outlay to £800.
- 18 Ibid. p.5
- 19 Preston Chronicle, 28 September 1833
- 20 I am indebted to the District Librarian of the District Central Library (Preston) for this information.

- 21 Preston Chronicle, op.cit.
- 22 Chadwick, op.cit. pp.106-7
- 23 Chadwick, op.cit. pp.106-7
- 24 SCPW, op.cit. p.10
- 25 First Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, B.P.P., Vol. XVII, 1844. Appendix, p.33. The figure of 200 acres indicated that the Report included areas set aside for building.
- 26 Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, B.P.P., Vol. XVIII, 1845, Appendix, Part II, p.30
- 27 Select Committee on Public Houses, B.P.P., Vol. XXXVII, 1853, p.373

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE MOVEMENT FOR PARKS: THE SECOND PHASE OF PARK DEVELOPMENT

1833 - 1845

To assess the effectiveness of the SCPW, it is necessary to examine how the Report was received, what action was taken by Parliament, and what the practical results were. The clearest summary of the achievements, in the period following the SCPW Report, appeared in the Second Report on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, published in 1845<sup>1</sup>, and this will be examined. The status of the new parks developed between 1833 and 1845 will be investigated, in order to determine the limits posed by the various forms of public park in that period. In addition, the design and use of some of them will be examined, in order to establish the extent to which their roles were seen in economic, social or political terms and in order to see how these roles differed from those identified in the first phase of park development.

The reactions of Parliament to the SCPW Report were influenced by the temper of the House of Commons at the time, for Government had relatively little to do with social legislation at this period. Individual and group enterprise in the Commons, often cutting across party lines, was of much more consequence. If the good will of this administration had any significance, it was that it could, if it exerted itself, deliver a number of votes, not that it conceived itself as charged with a programme of social improvement. In 1833, the influence of the Utilitarians, and that of J.A. Roebuck in particular, was much greater than their actual numbers and, when the Report of the SCPW was laid before Parliament, Roebuck saw this as an opportunity for canvassing support.

At last we are getting support for our open spaces and trees. I have promises from more than 20 today ... soon our towns will blossom and the air will be pure.<sup>2</sup>

The opportunity for action and for testing the reaction of Parliament to the findings of the SCPW came in 1834 when Lord Ellenborough brought in a Bill to enclose common fields. This was passed by the Lords but rejected by the Commons, who understood that it included commons as well



as common fields and attacked it on the grounds that it would result in the loss of recreation facilities; a decision which showed the strength of the opposition of the radicals and their supporters. A further opportunity for the radicals came in 1836 when another Common Field Enclosure Bill was put forward. The anti-enclosure lobby managed to attach a most important clause to this Bill which exempted common fields which lay within a certain radius of large towns from enclosure and this Bill was passed by both Houses.

Common fields were exempted from enclosure if they lay within

10 miles of London	
3 miles of towns of 100,000 population	
2½	70,000
2	30,000
1½	15,000
1	5,000

Commons and wasteland were also expressly excluded from its scope.<sup>3</sup> These exemptions related directly to the recommendations of the SCPW and reflected the general concern during the 1830s with the provision of open space in towns.

Among other Members of Parliament who were actively concerned with the provision of open spaces for recreation in the 1830s was James Silk Buckingham. Buckingham was elected MP for Sheffield in 1832 and, for three years in succession, he introduced Bills for establishing walks, playgrounds and public baths. He proposed that ratepayers should have the power to establish places of recreation, provided that a public meeting held at the request of fifty ratepayers, decided by a majority of two-thirds of those present to do so. He also proposed that elected committees should have the power to raise money to establish places of recreation and that these should have facilities for gymnastics, cricket, archery, and other healthy sports, but not for sports such as wrestling, boxing, or games which involved cruelty to animals. However, none of his Bills was passed,<sup>4</sup> and it was not until the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847<sup>5</sup> that local authorities could, with certain restrictions, buy or rent land specifically for use for recreation.

In 1835 Sir Robert Peel tried to establish that common lands, the public

stock of a town, and the rents and profits from them, belonged to the town itself and not to private individuals. The Bill was passed by the Commons but not by the Lords, who saw it as an attempt to amend the Municipal Corporations Bill in Committee.

Joseph Hume was more successful. In 1837 he proposed that, in all Enclosure Bills, provision should be made for leaving open space sufficient for the purpose of recreation and exercise of the neighbouring population.<sup>6</sup> Two years later this was supplemented by a motion, which became a Standing Order,

that in all Enclosure Bills provision should be made for leaving an open space in the most appropriate situation for the purposes of exercise and recreation of the neighbouring population.<sup>7</sup>

In practical terms, Hume also had some success, for it was largely through his efforts that Primrose Hill in north London was bought for the use of the public in 1842 (see p.68).

Thus the ideals of Parliament under the influence of radicals and Utilitarians were high, but the practical achievements in terms of land set aside for recreation under the Standing Orders were rather small. In 1841 a return was made to Parliament of land enclosed since 1837. This showed that, out of a total of 41,420 acres enclosed, 222 acres had been set aside for recreation, i.e. 1 acre in 186.<sup>8</sup> In the election of 1837 the radicals were defeated and it was not until 1841 that any further action was taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of the SCPW. In that year a grant was made by Parliament of £10,000 to encourage the provision of public walks and parks in the neighbourhood of large towns. A return made two years later of the ways in which this sum had been spent showed that £300 had been granted to the Provost of Dundee for improving Magdalen Yard, and £200 to the Provost of Arbroath for improvements in the neighbourhood of that town. The balance of £9,500 remained in the Exchequer.<sup>9</sup> It was not until 1856 that the whole of the grant was disbursed (Appendix II). Recommendations that open space should be reserved in the areas of new building continued to be made,<sup>10</sup> and the response to the Report of the SCPW was generally favourable. It did not, however, lead to much positive official action in Parliament other than those already mentioned: the addition of the important clause to the Common Field Enclosure Bill and the grant of £10,000.

### Summary of Achievements of Open Spaces

The clearest summary of the position regarding the provision of parks and open spaces in the period 1833-45 was presented in the Second Report on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts published in 1845. This Report was prepared in the aftermath of the great cholera epidemic and the First Report on the Health of Towns (1844), and it was very wide ranging in the information it sought (Appendix III). Whereas the aim of the SCPW had been merely to establish what open space was available for public use, the Second Report included not only this information but also information on geographical features, drainage, sewers, water-supply, cleansing, fire protection, housing, conditions of health, hospitals and schools. An indication of the importance attached to the provision of public parks can be seen in the report of Dr D. B. Reid for the Northern Coal Mine District:

It was again and again stated to me that next to the habitations of the poor classes and the introduction of proper arrangements for paving, cleansing, drainage, sewerage, the supply of water and ventilation, no measure would be of more importance to the public health than the encouragement of such means of recreation as would afford both fresh air and exercise, particularly to the junior population.<sup>11</sup>

The priorities were clearly stated in that Report. Unlike the Report of the SCPW, the Second Report generally distinguished between open spaces which were freely accessible to the public and those where there were restrictions of access, such as payment of a fee for entry. In addition, it often indicated the state of those facilities, their ownership and who was responsible for their upkeep. It therefore provided a useful survey of what had been achieved in that respect by 1845. The Second Report noted those towns which had commons and other open spaces that were accessible and used for recreation. For example, at Shrewsbury a walk had been laid out at the Quarry in 1719. In addition, there was an area of twenty-seven acres of common land near the town, called Kingsland, which was not planted or laid out,<sup>13</sup> where the burgesses had a right to go "Upon horses, coaches and on foot" for air and exercise.<sup>14</sup> At West Bromwich the Earl of Dartmouth lent a field of four acres at various times of the year for wakes and festivals. North Shields had many open spaces convenient for exercise in the country around, although it had no public parks or gardens, and Sheffield was in a similar situation, with public



roads leading to open and hilly countryside. At Halifax, the Lord of the Manor had proposed enclosing Skircoat Moor, a large piece of ground about a mile from the town. This was strongly opposed by the inhabitants "from a feeling of its importance to the town as a place for the exercise and recreation of the population".<sup>15</sup> At Newcastle-on-Tyne, Town Moor (1100 acres) and Castle Leazes (150 acres) consisted of grassland, but they were not within reach of the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the town.<sup>16</sup>

The Second Report also noted many towns which had public walks, but no public parks or gardens. Newcastle-under-Lyme, for example, had public walks which were well regulated, tastefully planted and kept in good order,<sup>17</sup> so had Chester which, in addition, had a field of nearly one hundred acres by the riverside which was used for recreation.<sup>18</sup> Durham had many excellent public walks which mainly belonged to the Dean and Chapter; however, Sunderland's public walks were marred by "the stench of the open drains accompanying them"<sup>19</sup> and those at Carlisle were by pools and ditches of "stagnant and offensive matter".<sup>20</sup> In Leicester, the gravelled foot-walk, New Walk, was about a mile long, but the Report noted that it was useless for the purpose of recreation because of the houses built on either side of it. There were no public parks or gardens in Leicester, but the Corporation had recently "appropriated one of their closes as a place for recreation" and this was much used for cricket and other games.<sup>21</sup>

The general feeling of the Second Report on the subject of the provision of open spaces and walks was that little had been achieved since 1833.

The great towns of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds and very many others have at present no public walks. Shrewsbury, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Derby and a few others possess them.<sup>22</sup>

However, there were indications of some progress by certain towns and that action to attain open space was under way in others. In particular, the Report noted that two major towns, Manchester and London, were making progress towards acquiring public places for recreation. In London there were parks towards the west and north-west and "Victoria Park, now in progress, will supply this want towards the east".<sup>23</sup> But south of the Thames the large populations of Southwark and Lambeth were still without any public walks. Manchester had not yet acquired any parks but "is now

making active exertions to supply this deficiency".<sup>24</sup> The Second Report had no doubt that, in view of the large amount of subscriptions already raised there, that objective would be achieved shortly.

In summarising the situation regarding open space for recreation in the East Midlands, the Report noted the "immense advantages, moral and physical" from the establishment of public parks like that donated by Mr Joseph Strutt to Derby. However, few people had the means of imitating that scale of generosity. In addition, the Second Report noted that Prince's Park, Liverpool "is now in course of preparation by a private individual, under restrictions but probably not for general convenience".<sup>25</sup> Other parks were opened in the period 1833-45 although they were not noted in the Second Report: Norfolk Park, Sheffield opened in 1841, and parks in Southampton and Edinburgh were opened in 1844. In addition, action was being taken to develop a park at Birkenhead and this was also not noted in the Report.

Table 1  
Summary of Park Development 1800-1845

<u>Date</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>First Phase</u>				
1811	Regent's Park	London	350	Royal
1830	Victoria Park	Bath	10	Rented
1833	Moor Park	Preston	200	Municipal
<u>Second Phase</u>				
1840	The Arboretum	Derby	11	Gift (semi-public)
1841	Norfolk Park	Sheffield	60	Gift (but remained the property of the Duke until 1909)
1842	Primrose Hill	London	-	Royal
1844	East Prince's Street Gardens	Edinburgh	-	Municipal
1844	Prince's Park	Liverpool	40	Speculative development (acquired by Liverpool Corporation 1918)
1844	Southampton Common and The Parks	Southampton	-	Municipal
1845	Victoria Park	London	193	Royal

Two new parks opened in this second phase as a result of the actions of benefactors, one of these was in Derby, the other in Sheffield. The land for Norfolk Park, Sheffield was owned by the Duke of Norfolk and, in 1841 it was laid out as a park with a peripheral walk, well planted with trees and with regularly placed seats. The two main open spaces had some

irregularly placed clumps of trees separating them (Figure 5). The activities allowed in Norfolk Park included cricket and football. The park remained the property of the Duke until 1909, when it was given to the City of Sheffield. Among the conditions of the gift were that houses at the Arbourthorne end of the park remained the property of the Duke, that he had the use of the road to get to them, and that the park-keepers and men employed in the park be taken into the Corporation service. Furthermore, if the land adjoining Norfolk Park Road was developed, the Duke retained the right to use the two roads which approached the park to assist him in developing this land.<sup>26</sup>

### Derby Arboretum

Despite its small size (11 acres), Derby Arboretum, 1840, was the more important of the two parks donated by benefactors. It received wide publicity both by virtue of the donor's position and through the writings of its designer J.C. Loudon.<sup>27</sup> An analysis of how the benefactor identified its benefits, the facilities catered for in its design and how accessible it was, will indicate how its role was perceived. Derby Arboretum was presented to the town by the manufacturer Joseph Strutt. The reasons he gave for doing so related in general terms to the growth of the town and the lack of provision of open space for recreation and, in specific terms, to the 1836 Enclosure Act. As there were no appropriate commons and wasteland in which open space could be reserved for recreation, Strutt said that "With a view of further promoting the same objects, I have determined to appropriate a piece of land ...".<sup>28</sup> This land was on the outskirts of the town and Strutt wished it to be laid out so that it would not be expensive to maintain and so that the existing flower garden (d) (Figure 6), cottage (e) and plantations were preserved, together with a toolhouse covered in ivy (g). A botanic garden would be too expensive to create and maintain, while a design that only featured trees, shrubs and turf "in the manner of a common pleasure-ground" would become boring after one or two visits.<sup>29</sup>

J.C. Loudon, the designer, proposed an arboretum, that is, a collection of foreign and native trees and shrubs, with no more than one example of each variety, each with its name. This would provide beauty, variety, interest, and education, in every season of the year. The layout advocated by Loudon was agreed by Strutt, who thought that it united "information with





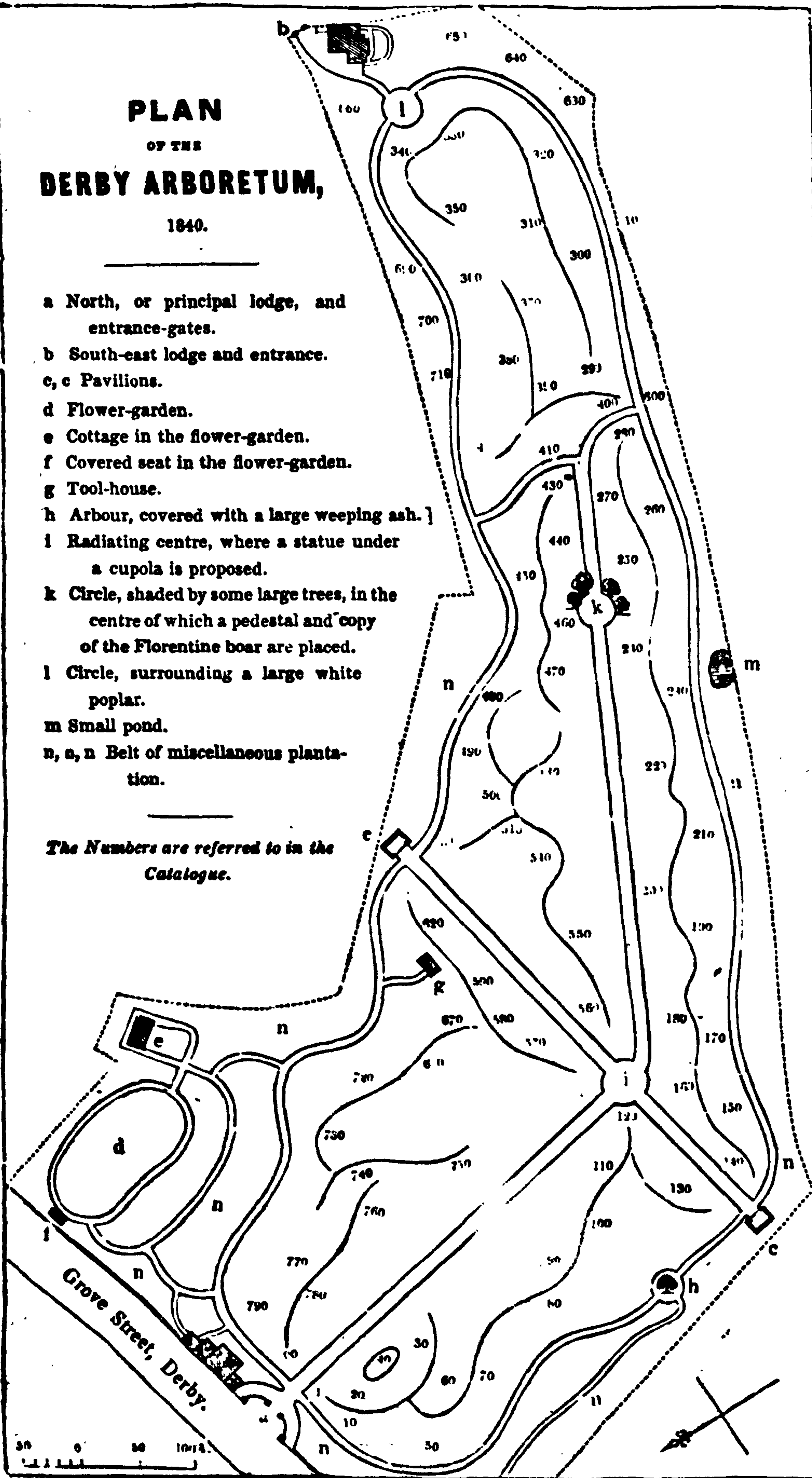
Figure 5 Norfolk Park, Sheffield. D.S. 1853



**PLAN  
OF THE  
DERBY ARBORETUM,  
1840.**

- a North, or principal lodge, and entrance-gates.
- b South-east lodge and entrance.
- c, c Pavilions.
- d Flower-garden.
- e Cottage in the flower-garden.
- f Covered seat in the flower-garden.
- g Tool-house.
- h Arbour, covered with a large weeping ash. }
- i Radiating centre, where a statue under a cupola is proposed.
- k Circle, shaded by some large trees, in the centre of which a pedestal and copy of the Florentine boar are placed.
- l Circle, surrounding a large white poplar.
- m Small pond.
- n, n, n Belt of miscellaneous plantation.

***The Numbers are referred to in the Catalogue.***



amusement". Strutt also wanted two lodges built, each containing a public room where visitors could eat their own refreshments and each providing "proper yards and conveniences ... for the use of the public".<sup>30</sup> In the garden there should be open spaces in two or more parts, where tents could be pitched for music and dancing.

For Loudon, the most important feature of the site was that there was no view or prospect beyond it worth taking into consideration, for the town was growing fast on all sides and liable to cut any present views off by later buildings. Thus, "the whole interest of the garden should be contained within itself" and the view of the surroundings concealed as far as possible.<sup>31</sup> The relationship of Derby Arboretum to its surroundings was therefore designed to be quite different from that at Regent's Park. The theory of appropriation was not applied and houses were not developed in conjunction with the Arboretum. Loudon raised up undulating mounds of soil seven to ten feet high (Figure 7) to disguise the boundaries of the site and to conceal people walking on the side paths from those on the central walks, so preserving the illusion of being alone, or almost, despite being adjacent to a large population. Flat spaces were left for tents as Strutt wished. Loudon also wanted to create hollows and hollow winding valleys, but the soil and difficulties of drainage prevented this. From the main entrance on Grove Street, there was a broad gravel walk through the centre of the site. At the junction with the main cross walk was a statue on a pedestal since "a straight walk without a terminating object is felt to be deficient in meaning".<sup>32</sup> Two pavilions formed the terminations for either end of the cross walk (Figure 8) and provided seats and shelter. They were in keeping with the more formal nature of these straight walks by being neo-classical in style and symmetrical about a central axis. By contrast, the two lodges (Figures 9 and 10) were in what Loudon called Elizabethan and Tudor styles respectively. Alongside each of these lodges were cast iron entrance gates. A new stone main entrance was built in 1853. Seats sufficient for 350 persons were provided and Loudon gave particular instructions for placing them.<sup>33</sup> The seats round the centre circle of the Arboretum should have stone backs and be more architectural in character than in any other part of the garden. In the centre of the circle (Figure 6) should be an obelisk or something similar, but Loudon left the choice of this to the managing committee.



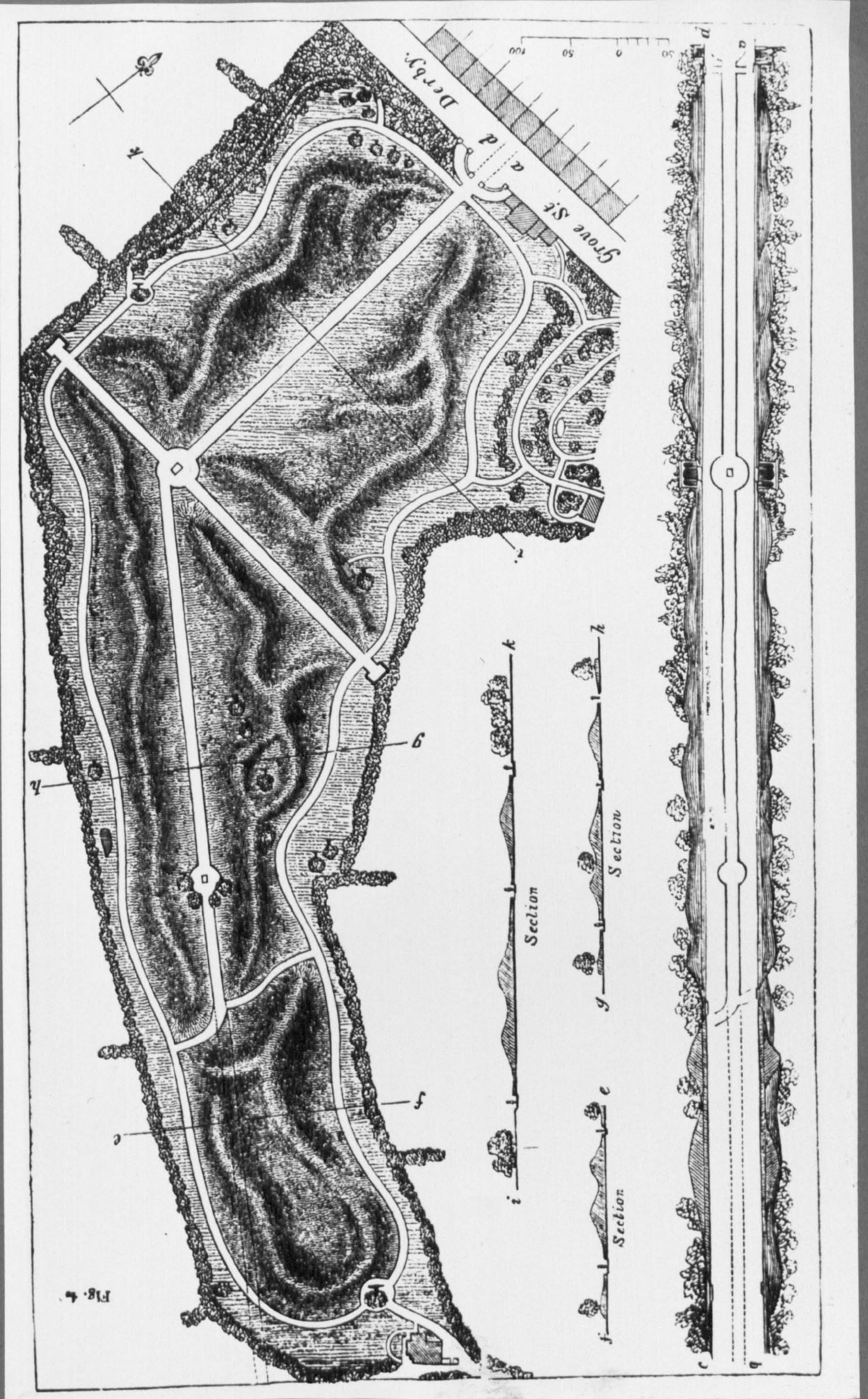


Figure 7 Derby Arboretum, plan showing undulations of the ground (J.C. Loudon, The Derby Arboretum)



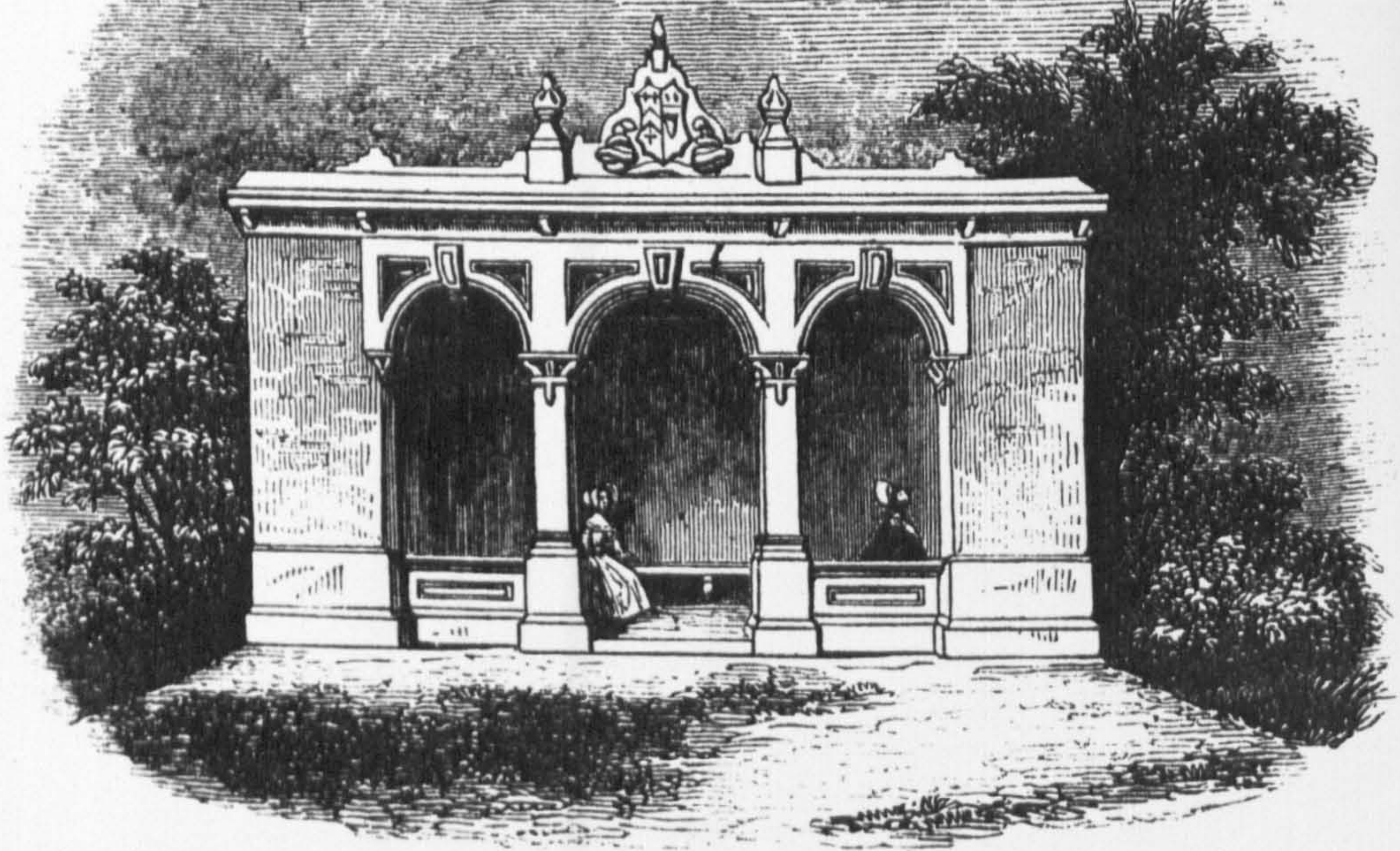
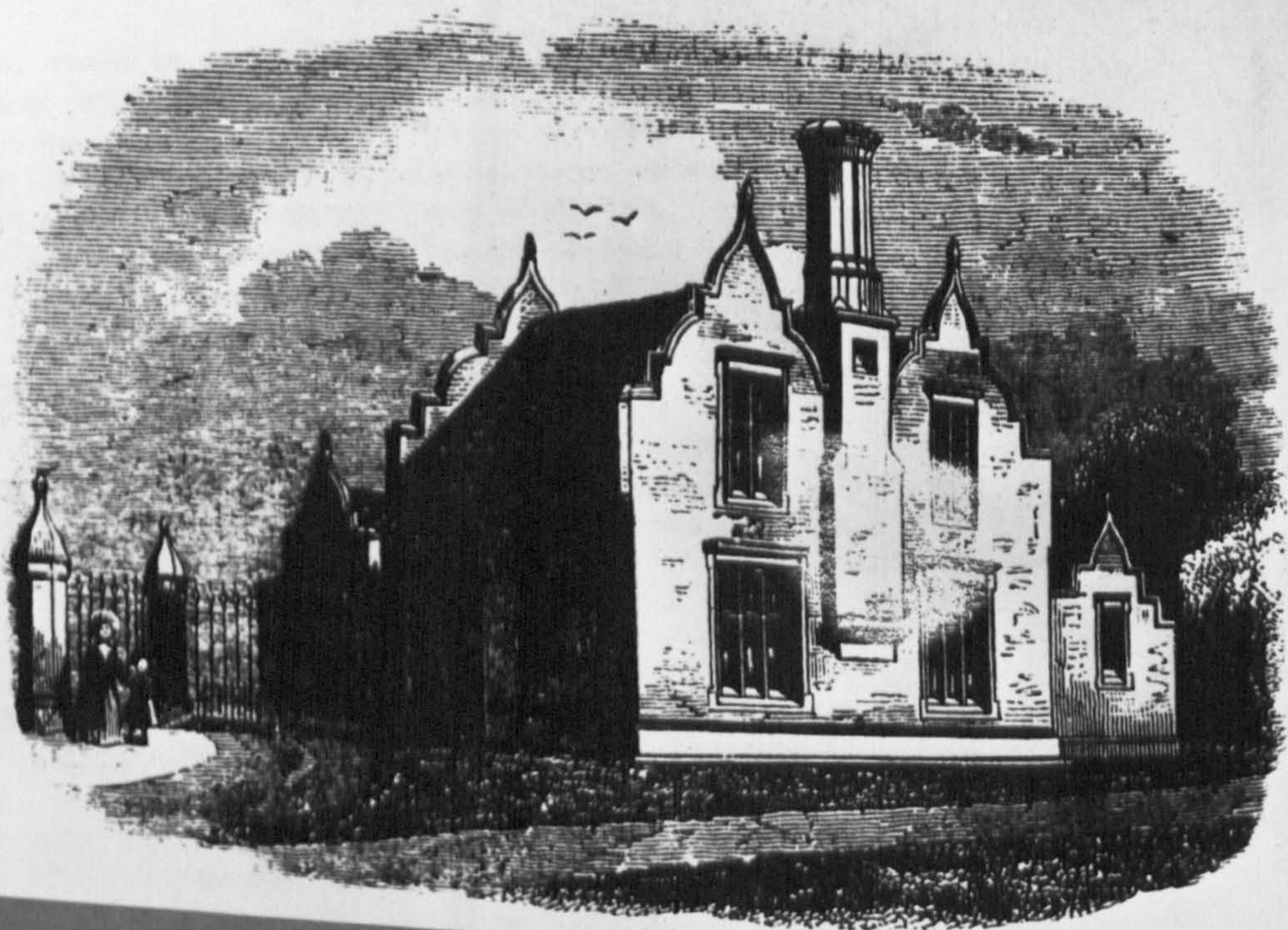


Figure 8 Derby Arboretum Pavilion (J.C. Loudon, The Derby Arboretum

Figure 9 "Elizabethan" style lodge (Ibid.)





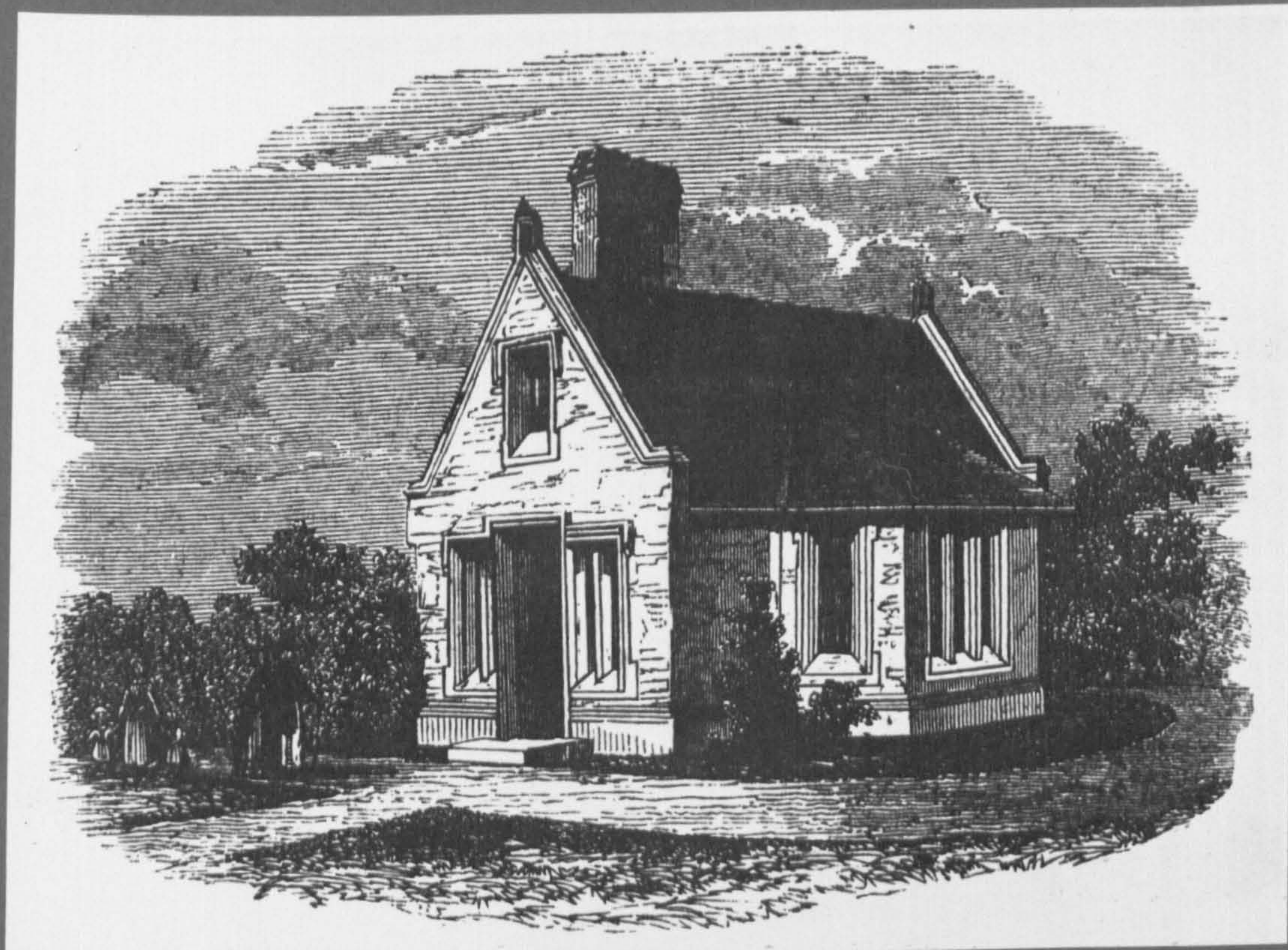


Figure 10 "Tudor" style lodge (J.C. Loudon, The Derby Arboretum)



The main expense in maintaining the Arboretum would, according to Loudon, be that of mowing the grass, and one man would be sufficient for this.<sup>34</sup> In the summer another man would be required for weeding, wiping the seats, etc., while the head gardener would maintain the flower garden and the pots of flowers at the junction of the walks, and see that the plants were not injured. In the winter, only a head gardener and one labourer would be necessary. There would be no greenhouse or nursery, as plants for the fifty vases would be obtained from Derby nurserymen.<sup>35</sup>

With its sheltered pavilions and public rooms in each lodge, the Arboretum could be used by the public in poor weather conditions and, from the design, it appeared that the main activities catered for were walking and sitting, except for the rare occasions when music and dancing were organised. But when Loudon had written on the subject of laying out public gardens in 1835, he had advocated the inclusion of certain sports facilities.

Archery grounds, cricket grounds, bowling greens and grounds for playing golf, skittles, quoits etc. may be considered as useful establishments, with a view to the health of citizens who pass the day in sedentary occupations.<sup>36</sup>

It would appear therefore that the users Loudon had in mind were unlikely to be manual workers. However, when the American landscape gardener, A.J. Downing, wrote about Derby Arboretum thirteen years after it had opened, he particularly noted the appeal of the skittle grounds to working people and he thought the Arboretum combined:

the greatest possible amount of instruction, with a great deal of pleasure for all classes, and especially the working classes. That it may appeal largely to the sympathies of the latter, even to those to whom all trees are alike, there is a fine piece of smooth lawn (added I think to the original eleven acres) expressly used as a skittle ground - a favorite English game with ball; at which numbers of men and boys were playing while I was there.<sup>37</sup>

It is therefore not clear who the users of Derby Arboretum were, but it is possible to make further deductions if its accessibility is considered. On the occasion of the opening of the Arboretum, Joseph Strutt said "it shall be open to all classes of the public, without payment ... on every Sunday, and also on at least one other day in every week ...".<sup>38</sup> The public were admitted free to it on Sundays, except during morning



service, and on Wednesdays from dawn to dusk throughout the year. Other days of the week were reserved for annual subscribers and for persons paying 6d for single admissions, and the income was used to maintain the grounds and buildings. In view of the hours of work prevailing at that time it is evident that the major proportion of the visitors to the Arboretum were unlikely to have been working people and the charge of an entry fee on five days of the week would have been a further inhibiting factor. The Westminster Gazette expressed regret that the grounds were not freely open all the year round, and continued:

... is it not preposterous, does it not seem incredible, that the ratepayers of Derby, through their representatives in the Town Council cannot, after receiving this noble gift, vote from their own funds one, two or three hundred pounds per annum, to preserve the property from deterioration and fulfil the intention of the donor? yet it is so.<sup>39</sup>

The Arboretum illustrated not only the role of the benefactor, but also the problems that such gifts presented to local authorities. Unless application was made for special leave from Parliament, a costly and lengthy process, local authorities could not, in 1840, use the rates for acquiring and maintaining public parks. Even if they had been donated a park, as in the case of Derby Arboretum, the local authority was not allowed to use money from the rates for its upkeep. To maintain the Arboretum, funds were raised by subscription and by charging admission to visitors on five days a week.

Derby Arboretum has been cited as being "the first park to be specifically designed for and owned by the public, as a direct result of the movement for Public Walks".<sup>40</sup> However, it was only open freely to the public on two days each week and on one of those days, Sunday, it was closed between ten and one o'clock, whilst on the other days an admission fee of 6d was charged.<sup>41</sup> It cannot therefore be regarded as a public park, because it was not freely accessible to the public (indeed, free access was not granted until 1882). It would be more accurate to see it as an example of semi-public space.

#### Prince's Park, Liverpool, 1844

This park was the first to be designed by Joseph Paxton.<sup>42</sup> As can be

seen from the plan (Figure 11), it was designed in conjunction with housing, and a comparison between this plan and that of Regent's Park shows that there are certain strong similarities in the relationship between the housing and the park. In both cases the theory of appropriation is applied and, from the houses, the park appears as an extension of the gardens. The site for the development had been acquired by Francis Vaughan Yates, from the Earl of Sefton for £50,000, and it was intended that the rental received from the houses around the park be used to maintain it and to pay for the wages, rates and repairs.<sup>43</sup>

Whereas Regent's Park was a speculative development for the crown, Prince's Park was a private speculative development and "the residents of the villas and terraces only were to have access to the park". Like Regent's Park, Prince's Park was an exercise in the use of the park to enhance the value of building land and the amenity of the area for the middle class residents. It remained privately owned until 1918 when the Corporation of Liverpool acquired control of it, and it was not until that date that it became a municipal park.<sup>44</sup>

The significance of this development to the subsequent development of the municipal park lay in the example of the economic success of the venture of combining park and housing and in the experience gained by Joseph Paxton in the particular exercise of Prince's Park.

### Southampton

Although Southampton was not mentioned in the Second Report, action was taken there by the Town Council in 1844 to secure land for parks. There were some similarities between this action and that of Preston Council in 1833, for both involved common land but, unlike Preston, Southampton applied for an Act of Parliament, the Marsh Act 1844, in order to achieve its aim. Under the terms of this Act, the Marsh common lands were to be freed of all common rights and leased for building. In return, the Council would buy out the common rights in Southampton Common and the lammas lands of Houndwell, Hoglands and East and West Marlands, which would then become open spaces for recreation maintained by the local authority. These lammas lands became known as The Parks and, together with Southampton Common, they in effect became municipal parks from 1844.<sup>45</sup>



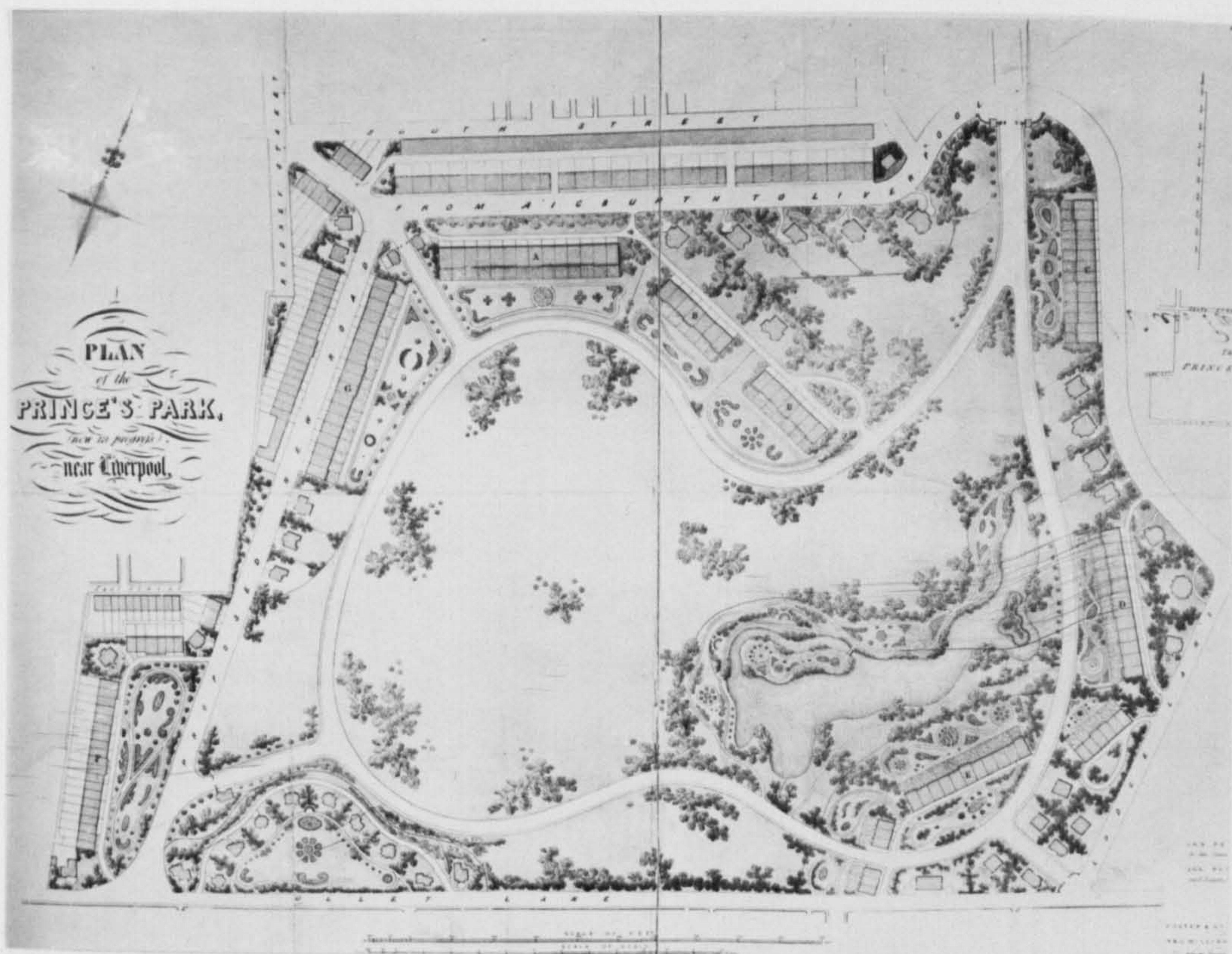


Figure 11 J. Paxton, Prince's Park, Liverpool c.1842  
(Liverpool Libraries)



## Edinburgh

East Prince's Street Gardens had been let as a nursery in 1830 and the proprietor allowed certain people to walk in the gardens for a payment of 10/6d per annum. The building of the Edinburgh-Glasgow Railway in 1844 resulted in the site being no longer suitable as a nursery and the area was taken over by the Corporation, laid out as gardens, and opened to the public.<sup>46</sup>

## Victoria Park, London

The need for a park accessible to the working population of the east end of London had been clearly identified and recommended by the SCPW and, of all the parks established in this period, Victoria Park's relationship to the SCPW Report is the most direct. For this reason and because it was one of the first parks to be established in a major city, its design and use will be examined in further detail in Chapters Six and Eight.

In 1842 Acts of Parliament were passed in order to establish a park to serve the east end of London.<sup>47</sup> Funds for the purchase of the site for Victoria Park were made available by a Royal Grant from the sale of York House.

An Act ... to complete the contract for the Sale of York House, and to purchase certain lands for a Royal Park ... containing about Two Hundred and Ninety Acres, in the Parishes of Saint John Hackney, Saint Matthew Bethnel Green and Saint Mary Stratford-le-Bow ... which Lands and Hereditaments, when purchased, were to be conveyed and assured to Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, and when so conveyed were for ever thereafter to be a Royal Park by the Name of Victoria Park ...<sup>48</sup>

It is quite clear that Victoria Park was a royal park. Primrose Hill in London was also acquired in 1842 for the public with land revenues from the crown,<sup>49</sup> and was thus also a royal park.

Although there was never an official opening, the public started using Victoria Park in 1845 while it was still being levelled and planted.

## Birkenhead

In this period up to 1845, the action of one further town to acquire a



park must be investigated: this is Birkenhead, which was also not included in the Second Report. In 1842 the Improvement Commissioners of Birkenhead promoted a private Bill, which was granted Royal Assent in April 1843 to enable them to purchase land:

for the Recreation of the Inhabitants ... not being less than Seventy Statute Acres, and (to) lay out, fence and plant the same as a Park and form Roads therein, with suitable buildings and other conveniences ...

This Act gave the Improvement Commissioners borrowing powers to provide a park out of public funds and they acquired 226 acres of land at a cost of £69,690. Of these, 125 acres were set aside for public use and the rest were sold for building sites.<sup>50</sup>

Birkenhead had developed as a place of residence for the wealthy merchants of Liverpool, after the Napoleonic wars, but gradually, with the building of Laird's shipyards in 1824, industrial features began to appear. In one view, the development of the park at Birkenhead could be seen as a response to the threat of the effects of industrialisation on the residential amenities for, when built, the park acted as a barrier between the artisan and wealthier quarters of the town.<sup>51</sup> While acting as a physical barrier, it also provided the potential for social mixing between the classes and this was one of the roles of parks that had been identified by the Utilitarians. The site selected by the park was owned by Birkenhead's biggest landowner, Richard Price, and the project had the support of some of the town's leading citizens.<sup>52</sup> Birkenhead Park was designed by Joseph Paxton and, in terms of its influence on later park developments in both Britain and America, it can be seen as one of his most important landscape designs. It will therefore be the subject of a further detailed study (See Chapters 6 and 8). It was certainly a public park because it was at all times freely accessible to the public and it was also a municipal park because it was acquired and maintained out of public funds raised by the local government of the town, the Improvement Commissioners. It was opened to the public in 1847.

### Benefits

No matter what the status was of the public parks, the Second Report and contemporary commentators were clear that their development was beneficial. One of the benefits identified in this phase of park development was the

~~ability~~ of the park to provide a source of fresh air.

capacity

The prime essentials to human existence in crowded cities are pure water, pure air, through drainage and thorough ventilation ...<sup>53</sup>

Nothing brought home the insanitary nature of towns more than the statistics on life expectancy published by Dr William Farr in his reports to the Registrar-General. These reports formed part of the many official investigations into the conditions in which the urban population lived. These investigations included: Reports such as the SCPW Report and the Second Report, which were based on written and oral evidence on a specific aspect of the condition of towns; the national collection of statistics on births, deaths and marriages and their interpretation in the annual reports of the Office of the Registrar-General by Dr William Farr published from 1841 onwards;<sup>54</sup> and statistics on individual towns such as those on Leeds published in the Statistical Journal in 1840, which described the state of the streets, housing, and people, gave details of the average number of rooms, their size and the number of beds in them. The fourth form of investigation consisted of small-scale surveys of streets and parishes. It was from these four types of investigation that official information on life and living conditions that formed the Reports on "the condition of towns" was amassed.

Farr's first report, 1841, showed that life expectancy at birth in England and Wales averaged 41.16 years; in Surrey it was 45 years, in London 37 years and in Liverpool 26 years. In his 1843 report, the statistics showed that life expectancy at birth in Manchester was 24.2 years and the average for England and Wales was 40.2 years.<sup>55</sup> The statistics showed that the higher the density the higher the mortality rate, so clean air and water, good drainage and open spaces should be promoted as necessary measures if urban living conditions were to improve. It was thought that many diseases were transmitted by air and that "noxious vapours", if allowed to remain stagnant, formed a source of disease.<sup>56</sup> It was important therefore that air should circulate and that opportunities for air to stagnate be minimised. Farr concluded from the statistics on public health that:

the source of the higher mortality in cities is, therefore in the insalubrity of the atmosphere ... Wide streets, squares and parks



with spacious houses would render ventilation easy, and secure the dilution of poisonous emanation.<sup>57</sup>

Parks and squares would, it was thought, act as lungs which enabled the exhausted air of the city to be refreshed, and this would occur whether the green spaces were open to the public or not. If they were open to the public then they would in addition form breathing spaces for the people using them, for the air would be cleaner there than in the crowded streets of the city. "The open and airy spots are becoming choked up with houses ... and the public are thus deprived of their breathing spaces".<sup>58</sup> The parks of London and other major cities were seen as their lungs and this idea of the lungs of the city was a pervasive one:

every city had its public pulmonary organs - its instruments of popular respiration - as essential to the mass of the citizens as is to individuals the air they breathe. Paris boasts her Boulevards ... her Bois de Boulogne, - Madrid her far-famed Prado ... and the mightily Babylon pours her pent-up population through the various avenues of her Parks. Well, indeed, and happily, have these been designated "The Lungs of London".<sup>59</sup>

It is in this second phase of park development that a strong link was made between parks and the health of towns.

Public opinion is gradually awakening to a sense of the importance of open spaces for air and exercise, as a necessary sanatory (sic) provision, for the inhabitants of all large towns.<sup>60</sup>

and this in turn related to the emphasis of the sanitary reformers on water, drainage and clean air. While most agreed that the provision of open spaces in towns or near them was important, there were however those who thought that many other facilities, such as bath houses, were more important.

Free public baths seem even more indispensable than free public walks, inasmuch as that the employments of the poor generally necessitate some kind of exercise, however partial or insufficient, whilst the almost universal neglect of personal ablution is without any such remedy.<sup>61</sup>

Another benefit attributed to the new parks was their ability to change the behaviour of working people. Indeed, according to witnesses to the Second Report, this was "proved" at Derby Arboretum.

The Arboretum, as these gardens are designated, is much frequented, and has already produced a perceptible effect in improving the appearance and demeanour of the working classes, and it has doubtless, conferred an equal benefit upon their health.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the Second Report recognised the role of the park in providing an alternative source of recreation to the attractions of the public house:

the encouragement of such means of recreation as would afford both fresh air and exercise ... and the institution of public games, museums or other opportunities ... would afford some inducement to the labourer to spend as much time and means with his family as he, in many cases squanders alone.<sup>63</sup>

Not only could parks divert working people from the attraction of the public house, they could also be used as a political diversion and this use was clearly recorded by Edwin Chadwick in the context of a Chartist meeting in Manchester in 1840.

On the holiday given at Manchester in celebration of Her Majesty's marriage, extensive arrangements were made for holding a Chartist meeting, and for getting up what was called a demonstration of the working classes, which greatly alarmed the municipal magistrates. Sir Charles Shaw, the Chief Commissioner of Police, induced the Mayor to get the Botanical Gardens, Zoological Gardens, and Museum of that town, and other institutions, thrown open to the working classes at the hour they were urgently invited to attend the Chartist meeting. The Mayor undertook to be personally answerable for any damage that occurred from throwing open the gardens and institutions to the classes who had never before entered them. The effect was that not more than two or three hundred people attended the political meeting, which entirely failed, and scarcely five shillings' worth of damage was done in the gardens or in the public institutions by the workpeople, who were highly pleased. A further effect produced was, that the charges before the police of drunkenness and riot were on that day less than the average of cases on ordinary days.

I have been informed of other instances of similar effects produced by the spread of temperate pleasure on ordinary occasions, and their rivalry to habits of drunkenness and gross excitement, whether mental or sensual.<sup>64</sup>



## Recommendations of the Second Report

A greater number of new parks was developed in the second phase of park development than in the first, but the lack of more extensive achievement related closely to two main factors: the legal restraints placed on local authorities for acquiring and maintaining land for municipal parks, as the example of Derby Arboretum clearly illustrated; and the cumbersome legal machinery involved in any procedure for town improvement. The parks that were developed and opened in this period were indicative of the difficulties that existed. However, the Second Report did not think that the difficulties in providing open space for recreation were as great as many had thought, "In many cases local exertion and munificence would accomplish the object if some assistance was given".<sup>65</sup> The Report recommended proper compensation and the empowering of the local administrative bodies to raise the necessary funds for the care of parks and walks once they had been established. These were sensible recommendations but very similar to those made twelve years earlier by the SCPW. In order to simplify the procedures for town improvement, alteration of the law was essential and this was another of the recommendations made in the Second Report.

## Local Government Institutions

The four different types of institution responsible for local government in the 1830s were the Municipal Corporation, the Improvement Commission which existed in most large towns, the Manorial Court, and the Surveyors of Highways. Surveyors of Highways were to be found in every parish or town in the country, but the existence of the other three institutions depended on the local historical background.

The term "municipal" means "pertaining to the local self-government or corporate government of a city or town" and dates from 1600 according to the Oxford English Dictionary, but in the context of this study it is the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835<sup>66</sup> that is important, for it marked the start of the formal structure of urban local government. The Municipal Corporations Act recognised the weakness of existing local government and to those boroughs that came within its terms it gave a more liberal constitution. However, because of the way in which many towns had evolved their institutions for local government, there were some major

exceptions to the Act. Birmingham and Manchester, for example, were in 1835 unincorporated towns and lay outside the scope of the Act. Their government was by Court Leet and Street Commission and neither achieved their municipal incorporation until 1838.<sup>67</sup>

Many towns had become municipal boroughs long before 1835. Leeds had been a municipal borough since the seventeenth century and both Liverpool and Bristol had had municipal corporations before the Act of 1835.<sup>68</sup> In these instances, the effect of the Act was to confirm their corporate status. The intention of the Act was to change the basis of authority, that is, the method of electing members to the town council. It was not intended to change the functions of the corporations radically and, indeed, in Leeds, the Act imposed only one new function on the Corporation, the provision of a police force, and the Corporation contributed nothing to the government of the town.<sup>69</sup> It was not until 1842 that the Municipality of Leeds became responsible for the administration of the new Improvement Acts.

The functions of municipal corporations varied widely. In Liverpool the Corporation was responsible for the creation and administration of the docks, it initiated a policy of street improvements, created two elementary schools and maintained a police force.<sup>70</sup> In 1835 Liverpool had a population of 200,000 and of these 6,000 were eligible to vote. The electorate was a middle class one until the municipal franchise was extended in 1850.

While the 1835 Act gave the reformed boroughs a more liberal constitution, it did not necessarily make the new corporations more effective administratively, for the divided responsibility between the Corporation and the Improvement Commissioners for public services and sanitary conditions persisted. Improvement Commissioners could hand over their powers to the local corporation, but they were not obliged to do so and were in no hurry to end their own existence. The powers of Birmingham's Town Council in 1838 were less than those of the Street Commission. The Street Commissioners did not hand over their powers and duties to the Corporation until 1851, when the electors were assured that the town could "be efficiently governed at a much smaller cost" by the Corporation.<sup>71</sup>

When Lord Morpeth introduced the Public Health Bill in 1845, he cited certain figures regarding the powers of incorporated towns in England.



Out of one hundred and eighty-seven towns, only twenty-nine had powers to act through their elected representatives on draining and cleansing, and sixty-two still had no means of doing so. In the case of towns with populations of over five thousand inhabitants, two hundred and seventy-six town councils had no powers regarding sanitation, streets or water.<sup>72</sup>

A further weakness came from the fact that local government areas did not expand as the towns expanded, so large parts of industrial towns did not come within any corporation, and administration fell to parish authorities and county justices with their even weaker powers. It was only gradually during the course of the century that the full machinery of local government came into being.

During the 1830s and 1840s, the main and indeed almost the only attempts to control the rapidly changing urban environment came from the initiatives of the largest towns who sought powers under local Acts to improve urban conditions. In Manchester, for example, the Borough Police Act of 1844 and the Sanitary Improvement Act of the following year indicated that the town was drafting a local sanitary code and "giving a lead to most of the other large towns in the country."<sup>73</sup> These initiatives were implemented by their municipal corporations. It was only in the late 1840s that Parliament began increasingly to resort to general Acts which could then be adopted by local authorities, but it was then the decision of the local authorities whether or not to adopt them. It is against this background of a gradually developing machinery for local government that the municipal park came into being.

In 1845 the procedures for introducing town improvements were simplified by the passing in Parliament of a series of Model Clauses Bills, which enabled local authorities to incorporate clauses relating to water and gas works, draining and other public works, in their own local Acts. Also in 1845, the General Enclosure Act<sup>74</sup> was passed and, in place of concern for the loss of public amenities by enclosure, enclosure was made easier and cheaper, as formerly each enclosure had required its own machinery. Under the 1845 Act, the Commission of Woods and Forests investigated proposed enclosures, safeguarded public interest, and ensured that the provisions of the Act were carried out. The Act stated that common land could not be enclosed except by provisional order; the consent of those representing one-third in value of the interests in the land was necessary for an application of enclosure, and the approval of two-thirds was necessary for the sanction of the enclosure. The Act required that special

reports be made to Parliament concerning the expediency of the enclosure where commons were within:

15	miles of London
4	miles of towns of 100,000 inhabitants
3 $\frac{1}{2}$	70,000
3	30,000
2	10,000

and that the health, comfort and convenience of the local inhabitants should be taken into account before a provisional order was made. So, in principle, it carried the concept that enclosure was a matter of concern to all local inhabitants, rather than just the Lord of the Manor and the commoners, much further than any previous Act. Commissioners were required:

to specify, as one of the terms and conditions of such inclosure, the appropriation of an allotment for the purposes of exercise and recreation for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

If they did not make this provision, they were required under the terms of the Act to state in their annual report the grounds for not doing so. No provision was made in the Act for the development of any land set aside for recreation by a town council, and it was not until two years later that this became legally possible. Where commons or wasteland were enclosed, the Act provided that a proportion of the land be set aside for the recreation and exercise of the local inhabitants, as in Hume's resolution of 1837, the acreage depending on the size of the local population:

4	acres for populations under 2,000
5	between 2,000 and 5,000
8	between 5,000 and 10,000
10	above 10,000

When Nottingham obtained an Enclosure Act in 1845, allowing building on former commons lands, 130 acres out of 1069 were set aside for public recreation.<sup>75</sup> In addition, the Act stated that village greens and town greens could not be enclosed, and it gave Commissioners powers, within narrow limits, to provide allotments and field gardens. No legal definition was made, however, of town greens and village greens, neither was provision made for the future growth of population in the proportion of land set aside for recreation. As presented, it appeared that this Act would safeguard open space for recreation whenever enclosures were made near large towns, but this was not to prove the case.



## Conclusion

By 1845 a movement for parks was clearly identified and initiatives to develop them were "now numerous and combined enough to render them a movement".<sup>76</sup> According to the Second Report, the necessity of providing parks was "now very generally received" and this general agreement marks one of the distinctions between the first and second phases of park development.<sup>77</sup> An examination of the parks opened in this second phase has made it possible to differentiate further between the various forms of public park. In the first phase of park development, the municipal park was distinguished from other forms of public park such as royal parks (Regent's Park) and parks which were rented. An examination of Derby Arboretum showed that although it was, in the terminology of the 1840s, seen as a public park, it would be more accurate to see it as an example of a semi-public park because of the restrictions placed on entry to it. The disadvantages of this semi-public status were, however, not commented on at the time. In the view of a contemporary writer, the parks of this period were examples of "private advantage and public service".<sup>78</sup> Prince's Park, Liverpool and Birkenhead Park were regarded as examples of the former, while Derby Arboretum illustrated the latter. Norfolk Park was a gift to Sheffield but it remained the property of the Duke of Norfolk until 1909. The use of the land as a park was at the discretion of the Duke and it could at any time be used for other purposes if he so wished. Prince's Park, Liverpool was a private speculative development apparently intended for the use of the immediate residents initially. This did not become a municipal park until 1919. Victoria Park, London was a royal park. The only towns in which municipal parks were being developed were Southampton, Edinburgh and Birkenhead. It was evident that the difficulties inhibiting the development of municipal parks by local authorities had not greatly improved in this period following the SCPW Report. The legal restrictions inhibiting local authorities from using the rates to maintain parks even if they had been donated one were seen at Derby Arboretum. The need to overcome these legal restrictions had been identified by the SCPW and the Second Report reiterated them some twelve years later.

The SCPW recommendations did nevertheless achieve some results: the exemption in the 1836 Enclosure Act of common fields from enclosure if they lay within certain distances of large towns; the grant of £10,000 by Parliament in 1841 to encourage the provision of parks, and the development

of Victoria Park in the east end of London. Although Strutt did not refer directly to the SCPW when he donated Derby Arboretum, he did refer to the 1836 Enclosure Act and so indirectly to the efforts of the Select Committee. This period may therefore be seen as one in which aspirations were high, although few parks were created and, in relation to the whole problem, their contribution was pathetic, nevertheless the achievement, in view of the difficulties, was important.

The significance of this second phase, however, lies not only in the particular number of new parks developed but also in the changes which distinguish this phase from the preceding one. The growing awareness of the economic potential of parks is marked by the appearance of the private speculative developer. This economic potential was recognised in the first phase, but the second phase saw that recognition extended to the private realm. Another of the differences between the two phases concerns the stress placed in the second period on the role of the park as a source of fresh air in crowded cities. The idea that parks acted as the lungs of cities and the link between parks and the health of towns related closely to the work of the sanitary reformers and their emphasis on the need for clean water, drainage and clean air. To be effective lungs, parks should be evenly distributed, so this was another factor which could affect park location. However, with the exception of Victoria Park, there is little documented evidence to indicate that park location vis à vis working class districts was an important factor in this second phase.

It is in this second phase that explicit statements regarding the potential of parks to change working people's behaviour are made. Parks could divert working people from visiting the public house or from attending political meetings, and improve their demeanour; "proof" of this was offered at Derby Arboretum and clearly recorded by Edwin Chadwick.



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- 27 For details of J.C. Loudon's publications and of his theories of landscape gardening, see Appendix I
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### LOCAL EXERTION AND MUNIFICENCE: THE MANCHESTER/SALFORD PARKS

The Second Report noted that the great towns of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds were all without public walks, but that London and Manchester were making progress towards acquiring them. In addition, Birkenhead was in the process of developing one. While Preston appears to have been the first town of any size to acquire a municipal park, Manchester must have the credit of being the first of the major industrial towns to do so. Both the SCPW and the Second Report had indicated that the need for parks was greatest in the largest population centres where the problems were most intractable. It will therefore be instructive to see how the problem of park provision was identified in such an urban centre and what attitudes are revealed. In the second phase of park development, the potential of parks as a source of fresh air, as a financially rewarding exercise, as a means of social control and as an alternative to other forms of recreation were stated in general terms. A case study of park design will make it possible to identify the role of parks in a particular urban centre and to see how this compared with the ideas expressed during the second phase. Since Manchester was the first of the major industrial towns to acquire municipal parks, it will form the subject of this case study and an analysis of the processes of park acquisition will reveal how the need for parks was identified in this particular case. From the design of the parks, it will be possible to see how these aims were put into effect.

In 1845 land for parks in Manchester was acquired and, in 1846, Philips Park and Queen's Park in Manchester and Peel Park in Salford were officially opened to the public. The initiative for that action dated from 1843 when Mark Philips, one of the two Members of Parliament, wrote to the Mayor on the subject of public open spaces in Manchester.<sup>1</sup> His attention had been drawn to this subject by the Parliamentary grant of £10,000, and he referred to this in his letter. By 1843 only £500 of this sum had been used, and he wrote:

I think if the Town Council of Manchester would take up the question, something might be done for Manchester ... If you think, with me, that we

could secure to Manchester the advantage of some public walks or places of recreation for our over-worked and underfed population, perhaps you will bring the matter before the Council.<sup>2</sup>

In March 1844 the Mayor, Alexander Kay, was petitioned by many of the principal merchants and manufacturers to "take steps for the immediate formation of a public walk, park or playground", and it was decided that a small provisional committee should be formed from those signing the petition, in order to outline a plan of action and to find out information from other towns. The Corporations of Edinburgh, Dublin, York, Glasgow, Canterbury, Derby and Devonport were contacted and, from the information supplied, the provisional committee recommended that Manchester should try to obtain four parks of at least twenty acres each, on the four sides of the town, in order that they should be as accessible as possible. The cost of these would be approximately £25,000.<sup>3</sup>

The next step was the organisation of a large public meeting, to be held in the Town Hall on 8 August 1844, in order to raise subscriptions for the formation of public parks. This was attended by people of all parties and chaired by the Mayor, who began the proceedings by outlining the steps that had previously been taken in order to promote parks. He thought that there had been little public enthusiasm for the subject until this year, 1844, but now the time for taking action was propitious since Manchester was undergoing a period of prosperity, in contrast to the deprivation of earlier years, of the cotton slump 1841-2. The resolution that the meeting was called to consider was:

That this meeting, considering the great extent, the dense and increasing population of the borough of Manchester, and the growing difficulty of obtaining for a large portion of its inhabitants ready access to fresh air and healthful recreation, declares its opinion that the formation of parks, public walks, or other open spaces for exercise and active sports in the immediate vicinity of the town, would contribute greatly to the health, rational enjoyment, kindly intercourse, and good morals of all classes of our industrious population.<sup>4</sup>

The first speaker to propose the resolution was Lord Francis Egerton<sup>5</sup>, who spoke of the debt he owed "to the industry and energies of the working classes of this town" and called on those present not only to support the resolution, but also to add to the number of subscriptions already received.<sup>6</sup> Other speakers for the resolution stressed that open space



set aside for recreation and exercise would not only result in improvements in physical health but would also purify the air of the city.

We must first secure great open spaces, to give, as it were, lungs to the inhabitants of densely-populated districts - reservoirs of fresh air, where people can not only recreate themselves, but the spaces themselves, containing so large an area, must naturally assist in a very material degree in the ventilation and purification of the town itself.<sup>7</sup>

In the parks cricket, archery, bowls and quoits could be played and these would provide an alternative to "the temptations of the tavern and the beerhouse, and their frequent accompaniments of immorality and vice".<sup>8</sup> They would also provide social contact and, said Mark Philips,

The mutual improvement of all classes must be the result ... the more they mix with one another ... the more they will understand of one another.<sup>9</sup>

Another speaker advocated their introduction more in terms of bread and circuses since it was "a mere matter of government ... that the more amusements were given to the people, the more contented they were".<sup>10</sup> The need for parks was therefore clearly justified in terms of physical health, clean air and social contact.

Mark Philips informed the meeting that he thought it might be possible to secure a grant from Parliament, provided that the people of Manchester contributed generously to the project, and the acquisition of these open spaces would then provide an example for other towns to follow. The sites must be chosen so that they were accessible to those for whose benefit they were intended, not on the outskirts of town, where they would be accessible only to the wealthy who could afford the time and had the means to drive out to them. After several speakers for the motion, the intended contributions were announced to loud and continuous cheering and great applause. Lord Egerton, Mark Philips and Sir Benjamin Heywood would each contribute £1,000, and the total subscription raised at the meeting was £7,000.<sup>11</sup> A month later, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, wrote that he wished to add his name to the subscription for the sum of £1,000 for, although he had no longer any personal connection with Manchester, he and his family were "under very deep obligation" to the industry of Manchester and he wished the project every success.<sup>12</sup>

## The Public Parks Committee

The final action of the meeting was to appoint a committee to put the resolution of the meeting into effect. The Mayor was appointed chairman, James Atherton, deputy chairman, J.C. Harter, treasurer, and the honorary secretaries were Malcolm Ross and Edward Watkin.<sup>13</sup> The full title of this committee, Public Walks, Parks, Gardens and Play-Grounds, indicated its concern for all types of open space for recreation. The functions of this committee were to raise the necessary funds, to advertise for, select and purchase sites, to decide on their laying out, and arrangements, and then to convey the properties to the borough and their successors "for the free use and enjoyment of the inhabitants in perpetuity", on condition that they would keep them in good order and repair forever. One of the first actions of the committee was to publish a general notice "Public Walks, Parks, Gardens and Play-Grounds" on 22 August 1844, addressed to all the inhabitants of Manchester, calling for contributions no matter how small. This notice referred to the resolution reached at one of the "largest and most influential Meetings ever convened in Manchester" and drew public attention to the need to support this, before the committee began a general canvass of the town.<sup>14</sup> The project would involve large expenditure, and the notice appealed to the rich in terms of their duty and responsibility, while the less affluent were called upon to make some sacrifice and self-denial, and the poor assured that no sum was too small to be beneficial. The committee then set up a general canvassing committee and, following this, ward committees and working men's committees were soon organised.

The next large meeting to be organised took place on 10 September 1844 at the Free Trade Hall and this was attended by about five thousand working people from Manchester and Salford. An address adopted at the meeting stressed the value of health, particularly to the poor, who possessed nothing else of value, and compared the human body with that of a machine. A machine needed oiling and looking after if it was to work well and not break down before its time and, as oil was to machinery, so pure air was to the human frame:

it prevents the friction and corrosion of parts, removes impurities from the blood ... Bad air fills the body with impurities, and impedes its proper action; just as bad oil clogs and hinders the progress of machinery.<sup>15</sup>



The address then compared the mortality rates of Manchester with those of Broughton, the former being twice that of the latter and asked what could be done to improve the chances of life and health in Manchester? The answer lay in the discovery that, although air which had been through human lungs once was no longer fit to breathe, and if breathed again produced disease and death, it was nevertheless useful in the vegetable world and, moreover, oxygen was produced by vegetation. So what was needed in Manchester to preserve health was:

A greater amount of vegetation, open spaces for ventilation, active recreation and exercise, so as to oblige us to breathe the greatest amount of oxygen to purify the blood.

The address ended with the ringing cry:

Parks must be established, life preserved, health confirmed or restored, intellect cultivated and morals improved, and working men and women must each cast in their mites and work heartily in the cause.

These general meetings were followed by local meetings held in several of the principal workshops and mills, e.g. Messrs Sharp Bros., Hoyle & Sons, Kershaw Leese & Co., Whitworth etc. Many of these were attended by the honorary secretaries of the Parks Committee "who by desire of the workmen, addressed them".<sup>16</sup> Subscription lists were sent to mills, warehouses and shops, and the canvass set up by the Parks Committee was supplemented by one set up by the Odd Fellows. The major subscribers were listed by name, with the amount donated and sometimes the street, or area, where they lived or worked was given.<sup>17</sup> Where subscriptions were collected from particular warehouses, the major donors were sometimes named but no indication was given of their occupation.<sup>18</sup> With the subscriptions from workmen in the employ of particular companies, the larger donors were named, but their occupation or address were not given.<sup>19</sup> It is therefore not possible to determine from these records how the subscriptions related to the various residential districts of Manchester or how much was contributed by, say, the residents of inner Manchester.

All canvassing ceased on 8 August 1845, the anniversary of the first meeting and, by Christmas of that year, subscriptions had reached £32,470.2s 5d. and four thousand people and firms had subscribed. The energy and enthusiasm with which the fund-raising had been supported by

all sections of the population of Manchester was noted by L. Faucher in Manchester in 1844:

A pleasing feature in this movement is the united exertion of the different classes of society in one common object. The millionaire has cheerfully come forward, and acknowledged by princely donations, the moral claims of his poorer fellow-townsmen upon the capital which they have assisted in creating; and the working classes have organised themselves into districts and canvassing committees in support of the same object.<sup>20</sup>

While the canvassing and fund-raising were progressing, the Public Parks Committee made a formal application to the government in April 1845 for a contribution from the grant of 1841 and an interview took place at Downing Street on 6 April between Sir Robert Peel and the chairman and the honorary secretaries of the committee. The Prime Minister agreed to recommend that Manchester receive £3,000 from the fund, provided a Government surveyor inspected the way in which the money was spent and provided the local subscriptions of £30,000 were paid up. According to The Builder, the deputation felt bound to decline this sum of £3,000 since it was of the order of an "eleemosynary dole" rather than a liberal grant appropriate to the importance of the subject.<sup>21</sup> But the money was accepted and, on 26 May, the Mayor, Alexander Kay, wrote to the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel that they hoped that this sum would be "a portion only of that assistance which a Community like Manchester (disposed mainly to rely on its own efforts) may reasonably seek at the hands of Her Majesty's Government".<sup>22</sup> The Prime Minister, however, did not feel that he could give any assurance on the subject of an additional grant.<sup>23</sup> In his letter, the Mayor also notified the Prime Minister of the progress made by the Committee towards acquiring parks. The sum of £27,409. 2s 11d had already been paid into the bank and the sites for three parks had been purchased. These represented a revision of the original plans that had been submitted by the deputation for sites for four parks.<sup>24</sup>

Park Sites and Location

The sites purchased were

Lark Hill, 7 acres from W. Garnett	£4,600
Land in Walness, adjoining Lark Hill, 23 acres from Fitzgerald	£5,400
Hendham Hall, 30 acres from J. Andrews	£7,250
Land at Bradford, 31 acres from Lady Hoghton (sic)	£6,200



and the total sum reached £23,450.<sup>25</sup>

The price paid for Lark Hill included "a very large mansion", the residence of the high sheriff of the county, William Garnett, which could be used for refreshments; with grounds that were already partly laid out.<sup>26</sup> This site together with the land at Walness, became Peel Park. It was situated to the west side of Manchester (Figure 12), "one mile from the Exchange, near the Salford side of Manchester and convenient for the whole of Salford".<sup>27</sup> The Hendham Hall Estate, which became Queen's Park was "well situated for the dense population of St. Michael's Ward" on the north east side of Manchester. As can be seen from Figure 13, this site was to the north of St Michael's Ward but not immediately adjacent to it, and about one and a half miles from the working class areas of the north side of Manchester. The Queen's Park site also contained a large house which could be adapted for refreshments, with grounds that were partially laid out. The western part of the estate featured walks and playgrounds, and the southern part flower gardens, shrubberies and a 1,200 square yard area of water.<sup>28</sup>

The only site that was not already laid out was the Bradford Estate, which became Philips Park. This was situated near "a population of at least 50,000 chiefly of the classes most needing ... a public park".<sup>29</sup> The site was bounded on the north and east by the river Medlock and on the south by fields and the Ashton canal. As there was no house suitable for refreshments, the Steam Engine Tavern on the roadside to Bradford would be converted to form a large refreshment room for the park. The Leeds and Manchester Railway Co. had placed a station on their Ashton line at Bank Bridge, thus people on the west side of Manchester, and those at Salford, could, for a few pence, go by rail to within four minutes' walk of the park. This comment on the convenience of the railway line for access to Philips Park indicated that, although the site was near to a population of working people, it was also not immediately adjacent. It is evident that the Committee were concerned that the parks should be located near the districts where working people lived, but no evidence has been found to indicate whether a number of alternative sites were considered.

### The Competition for the Design of the Parks

The next phase in the development of the parks was their design. In







November 1844 the Public Parks Committee had unanimously agreed upon the facilities that the new parks should offer. Each should have a gymnasium, one or more fountains of pure water, numerous seats, and spaces should be set aside for active sports such as quoits, skittles and archery. Buildings would be erected to provide tea, coffee and other refreshments and the clearly stated objective was "to provide the greatest variety of rational recreations for the greatest possible number".<sup>30</sup> In order to select the designs for the parks, a competition was set up with a first prize of fifty guineas and a second prize of twenty-five guineas. for the best set of plans, together with estimates for the laying out of the three sites already purchased. The winners would oversee the execution of their plans.

The information sent to competitors included the names and sizes of the three sites and the fact that two were already partially laid out. The total cost of laying out, planting, fencing and draining, including the provision of seats for all three sites, was to be about £4,000, but this figure did not include the cost of lodges and other buildings for which other funds would be available. The Public Parks Committee stressed that, as they had limited funds at their disposal, they would be concerned in their final decision with "facility and cheapness". The plans should indicate the sites of the playgrounds, archery grounds, quoit, skittle and ball alleys, refreshment rooms, fountains, lodges and retiring places, and the designers should pay "utmost regard ... for the promenading of large numbers of persons" and remember that they were sketching "a park for the public , to be constantly accessible, and not a private pleasure ground". A carriage drive around the parks would be desirable, but they should not cut across the sites. No mention was made in these instructions to competitors of gymnasia for the parks but otherwise the facilities were the same as those agreed by the Committee the previous year.<sup>31</sup>

Over one hundred designs were received and put on display to the public for four days, 27-30 October 1845.<sup>32</sup> The estimates of costs for the designs varied widely, some being as low as £2,000, one as high as £9,000.<sup>33</sup> According to a report in The Builder, the problem in comparing the plans was considerable, since the scales to which they were drawn varied, as did the mode of presentation. Some were drawn in pencil, some in india ink, some in sepia tint, and others coloured, which made them superficially

very attractive. Most showed ground plans, but there were some birds' eye views which presented the groves and arbours in an engaging way. As the average area of each park was only thirty acres, it was important to make the most of the space available. Contemporary critics felt that straight lines intersecting at right angles should be avoided and:

winding curves, or what are called "serpentine" seem naturally to suggest themselves. Yet, some of the plans look like the laying-out of streets of the city, rather than the walks and places of exercise and sport in a park.

The chief features in the designs varied, some emphasised the artificial lakes, others the fountains and, in some designs, the planting was so close "as to resemble a maze". Few of the plans gave elevations for the lodges, refreshment rooms and shaded seats, and some of the plans filled every area with walks and hedges, leaving only small patches of grass in between, so that there was no large open grass space where crowds could gather to listen to music or to take part in some festivity. The adjudicators of the competition were thus presented with problems in comparing all the entries. These were, however, reduced to nine entries and subsequently to three, and the first prize was awarded to Joshua Major & Son, Knowstrop, near Leeds, and the second prize to H. Bigland & Co., of Manchester.<sup>35</sup>

The agreement between the Public Parks Committee and Joshua Major stated that Major should superintend the laying out of the parks, according to the plans which he had presented, "with such alterations as the Committee may from time to time suggest". He was to make at least one visit per week to see that progress was going as planned and to send one or two competent persons to take charge in his absence until "the whole of the parks are completed in the opinion of the Committee". Major was to provide detailed schemes so that the Committee could make clear arrangements with the contractors. His fee on the completion of and opening of the three parks was £200; the wages of the persons sent by Major to superintend the contractors' work would be paid by the Committee at a rate of one guinea per week.<sup>36</sup> Funds for the project were certainly not lavish, for, in December that year, the Public Parks Committee called for donations of articles likely to be of use for the parks, "particularly Stone, Flags, Bricks, Timber, Derbyshire Spar, Shrubbery Plants, Forest Trees, Iron Railings, Gates, etc. etc."<sup>37</sup> Anyone wishing to make such donations was asked to contact the honorary secretaries.



The clearly stated objectives of the Public Parks Committee were that the parks should provide the greatest variety of recreations for the largest possible number of people, and that great attention should be paid to the promenading of large numbers of persons. Thus the main problem that Major's design had to solve was to fit this wide range of activities into the limited space of the three parks and produce a satisfactory landscape according to the principles of the period. This problem was complicated by the fact that two of the sites were already partially laid out.

### Park Design

In the Manchester parks, Major designed the pleasure ground to be as near as practicable to the edges of the sites.<sup>38</sup> His views on the possibilities of the pleasure ground for providing interest and variety are clear.

In places that will admit of it, I invariably make a point of dividing the pleasure ground into different compartments, with the intention of exhibiting various scenes, and so enhancing the interest and prolonging the exercise of the visiter (sic), as he proceeds from one scene to another: and, as bodily and mental exercise are highly conducive to health, such recreations as will at once attract the mind and exercise the body should be preferred.<sup>39</sup>

He was referring in that example to the pleasure ground of the private property owner, but the principles were equally applicable to the problem of public park design. Moreover, the winding paths and the varied trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns could also provide the partially hidden recesses for a variety of sports. The picture of Queen's Park (Figure 14) shows climbing poles partially hidden by trees and shrubs. The archery ground of Peel Park (Figure 15) is however more visible, indeed, with the footpath passing behind the targets, perhaps this was essential to safety.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the games already mentioned, Major's designs for the pleasure grounds also accommodated a quoit alley, skittle ground, bowling green, gymnasium, marbles and seesaws for males, while for females there were separate sites for seesaws, ball, skipping-ropes and other games. Both Queen's Park and Philips Park contained labyrinths or mazes<sup>41</sup> for, in 1852, repairs to the one in the former park were authorised and it was re-opened to the public the following year.<sup>42</sup> For reasons perhaps of upkeep, both were recommended to be removed some



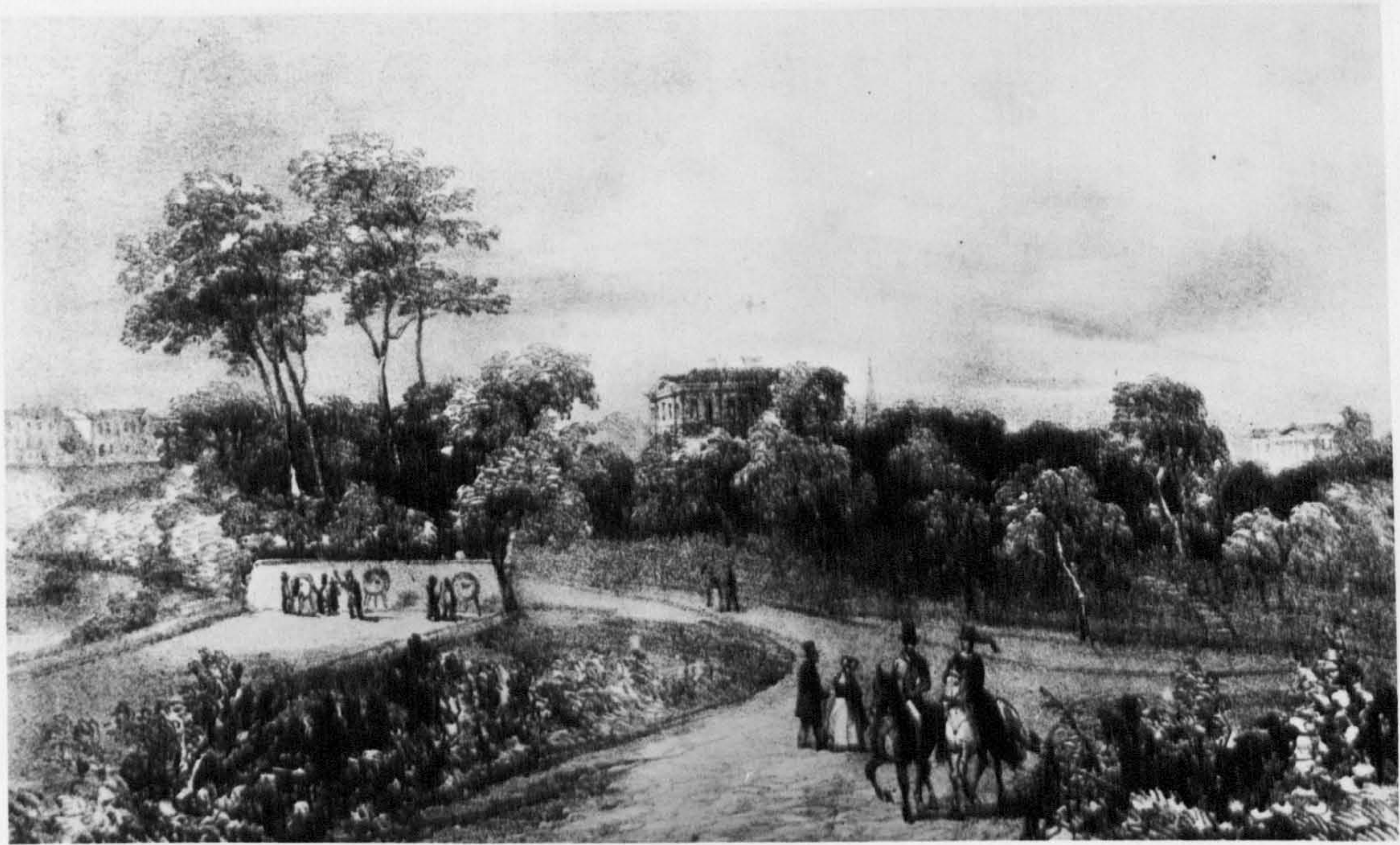


Figure 14 Queen's Park archery ground c.1852  
(Manchester Central Library)

Figure 15 Peel Park, c.1850 (Manchester Central Library)







Figure 16 J.E. Greggan, entrance lodge, Queen's Park, 1846



ten years later.<sup>43</sup> It was not until 1855 that a fountain was installed in Philips Park. This supplied drinking water as well as providing an attraction in itself, but there was still no fountain in Queen's Park at that date.<sup>44</sup>

In the centre of the sites was an open playground of 12-15 acres, where large public meetings could be held and various games played, such as cricket, leaping poles, football and foot-races.<sup>45</sup> In the picture of Peel Park, the houses facing the park are clearly visible and the park appears to form a continuation of the gardens belonging to these houses, in accordance with Repton's doctrine of appropriation.

All the parks were fenced and gated and featured principal entrances with lodges and entrances for pedestrians. At Peel Park the principal entrance was at the south, opposite The Crescent, and the lodge was designed by J.E. Greggan. At Queen's Park, the lodge at the main entrance (on Rochdale Road), also designed by J.E. Greggan, was "a very neat edifice of fire brick, with handsome stone pedimented porch and plinth, and the chimneys are faced and capped with stone".<sup>46</sup> Figure 16 shows the more modest lodge at the opposite end of the park. The type of fencing varied: at Queen's Park part of the fencing along Park Street was wooden, but it was later recommended that this be replaced by a dwarf wall, coping and iron railings<sup>47</sup>; and part consisted of iron railings.<sup>48</sup>

In most respects, the Public Parks Committee approved of Major's ideas, however, they did propose "to lay out and make several additional walks and footpaths to and from the playgrounds, and also, where required, in the open parks".<sup>49</sup> They did not agree with his idea for an inner fence of wire to divide the open central area from the pleasure grounds. As sheep were the cheapest way of keeping a large grass space in order, when the grounds were not in use by the public, the wire fence would keep the sheep from damaging the pleasure ground and would also prevent tracks across the grass that were not planned. Many of such tracks were subsequently formed and Major later complained that "the boldness and freedom of the whole has been to a great extent destroyed".<sup>50</sup>

To maintain the newly planted parks in good order when they were opened to the public, the Public Parks Committee decided that movable iron hurdles



would be useful for protecting the new plantations and for fencing portions of grass occupied by sheep at night "thus benefitting the grass, and being a source of revenue to the Council". The honorary secretary argued that as the hurdles would be removable and would be needed only in order to preserve the parks in the state that they were delivered to the Council, "it will be apparent that their cost should form a charge on the Council, and not on Park funds".<sup>51</sup> The Council voted on this matter and disagreed, refusing to authorise an expenditure of £900 for this project. The Public Parks Committee heard of this decision from the press instead of being officially informed and wrote again to the Mayor on 6 July 1846 pointing out the conditions under which the parks were to be vested in the Council, namely:

to keep in good repair, order and condition, all the said lodges, gates, gymnasium, or other buildings, ball alleys, quoit, skittles, or archery grounds, seats, fences, enclosures, roads, ways, paths, drains, fountains ... and keep in good cultivation ... the said gardens and plantations.<sup>52</sup>

This letter proved more effective and the Committee was authorized to spend a sum not exceeding £1,200 on fencing and hurdles. This must have been one of the last actions of the Public Parks Committee. On 4 August 1845 they had sent a resolution to the General Purposes Committee that the properties should be conveyed to the Council and held in trust for the purposes declared in the original resolution passed at the public meeting held on 8 August 1844.<sup>53</sup> On 22 August 1846 the three parks were opened officially with a procession from Peel Park to Philips Park and Queen's Park, followed by festivities. Immediately after the official opening, the Council recommended the appointment of a new committee to care for and maintain the parks and to let the various refreshment houses. The chairman of this newly constituted committee would be Alderman Kay and, unlike its predecessor, it consisted entirely of elected members of the Council.<sup>54</sup>

As Manchester did not wish to remain responsible for a municipal park which was situated in the middle of Salford, the Council decided on 26 August that Peel Park should be handed over to the borough of Salford, and this was undertaken officially at a meeting in Peel Park on 5 September.<sup>55</sup>

On the occasion of the handing over of Peel Park, the newly constituted committee also inspected Queen's Park and Philips Park in order to see what work was still required. For both parks they recommended additional seats and garden tools and two additional sets of swings:

one for girls only, in a situation remote from the one used by boys, and the other for boys; it having been already found where boys and girls are mixed together, the former<sup>56</sup> exclude the latter from the use of the swings.

They further recommended two more sets of circular swings, one for boys and one for girls only, and some seesaws for girls that were of better construction and more durable than those at present in use. The swings and seesaws had all been installed by November that year; the girls' swings were installed on the south side of Queen's Park in a grass playground and the boys' swings and seesaws at the north-west corner in a gravel playground.<sup>57</sup> The committee thought that tanners bark or spent dyewood should be laid down in the gymnasia to prevent accidents from falls.<sup>58</sup> As Figure 14 indicates, riders on horseback were allowed to use Peel Park but the question of whether the parks should be thrown open to carriages was the subject of discussion. It was later felt that the roads in the parks were not wide enough for carriages without causing danger "particularly to Children and Adult Females" and that the foundations were insufficient.<sup>59</sup>

The other item raised by the Committee was the question of public conveniences, because of "the absence of all accommodation in the immediate neighbourhood, and the importance of securing females from all possible intrusion".<sup>60</sup> Mr Malcolm Ross, however, disagreed with the idea of female conveniences:

It is not desirable at any time to have too much accommodation of this kind, nor are the public parks the proper places for such matters. Besides I do not think encouragement should be given to such occupation and I conceive that there is indelicacy in the very idea.<sup>61</sup>

The Council decided that such facilities should be built and the other requests were approved, provided that the sum of £1,200 was not exceeded. A report on the permanent annual expenditure for each park was approved and adopted and regulations for the preservation of good order in the parks agreed.<sup>62</sup> The condition of the parks after a year of public use was summarised by the Superintendent, Dr C. Goodwin, who had been appointed



to supervise the formation of the parks and retained until August, 1947.

The fences are perfect, the walks are in good condition - the trees and shrubs everywhere thriving, and the numerous seats, swings, gymnasias and other property have been preserved from all injury, and are nearly as perfect as when placed upon the ground. The lodges are tenanted by active and deserving servants, who have during the year kept them in a very clean and creditable condition, - The Refreshment Houses are also highly creditable to the Tenant for the manner in which they have been fitted up. - The weirs at the Philips Park are also completed substantially and satisfactorily and all the ornamental waters are in perfect order.<sup>63</sup>

### Regulations

The deed of conveyance gave the Public Parks Committee responsibility for maintaining the parks in good condition and listed particular regulations for their use and control. They were to be open free of charge on all days of the week, and closed one hour after sunset each evening; the gymnasium was to be closed every Sunday, and no person was allowed to sell intoxicating liquor. In addition the Corporation was required to provide gate keepers and policemen "to maintain good order and prevent riotous conduct".<sup>64</sup> One of the first actions of the new Committee was to put notices up in the parks, listing the times they were open and that the gymnasium was not to be used nor were games to be played on Sundays, and that no flowers were to be picked.<sup>65</sup> A month later, the following regulations were drawn up by the Public Parks Committee and approved by the Council.

- 1st. This park will be open from sunrise until not later than one hour after sunset. The alteration in the hours of closing will be announced weekly.
- 2nd. A bell will be rung fifteen minutes before the gates are closed, and again at closing.
- 3rd. No person allowed to enter the park in a state of intoxication.
- 4th. All gambling and improper language is strictly prohibited; and no games or gymnastics permitted on Sundays.
- 5th. The refreshment houses will be closed during the hours of divine service on Sundays.
- 6th. No dogs admitted.
- 7th. No males permitted to intrude upon the play-grounds of the females.
- N.B. All the servants of the park are constables, and are instructed to preserve order, and strictly to enforce these regulations.<sup>66</sup>

These regulations did not specifically prohibit the picking of flowers, or

damage, but the preservation of order by the park-keepers would have included this (Figure 17).

For the care and protection of the parks, the Committee recommended that each park should have a park-keeper, who would also act as the lodge-keeper, and live in the lodge rent-free at a salary of 25/- per week. In addition, there should be a second lodge-keeper with rent-free accommodation at a salary of 18/- per week, and two labourers at 18/- per week each.<sup>67</sup> The first bye-laws drawn up and approved on 4 March 1868 did not differ substantially from the regulations of 1846, although they did list the actions and activities that were prohibited in more detail.<sup>68</sup> In neither case were public meetings or assemblies specifically prohibited.

### Planting and Maintenance

A contemporary source noted in 1848 that of the three parks, Peel Park "surpasses both the others in the perfectly level surface and great extent of its open parks and lawns" and was thus particularly suitable for cricket and football. Several alterations were made to Major's design within the two years following the official opening in 1846.<sup>69</sup> These mainly concerned raising the ground in various areas, the planting, and moving the girls' giant strides which had been in a corner of the park near the river, nearer to the skittle alleys (Figure 18, LL). In the area at the base of the bank leading to the level park, a two-acre flower garden was formed, with 875 yards of new walks five-feet wide, and a rosarium and formal features were introduced, such as two circular mounds sixteen and twenty-two yards in circumference respectively. The small mound, three yards high and three and a half yards wide at the top, was crowned by a terracotta vase. Fifteen yards away, the other mound, which was four yards high, was crowned by a maypole, surrounded by rockwork and four antique casts of heads: a Roman matron, a Titan, an Apollo and the head of Laocoon. Both mounds were planted with geraniums, roses, fuchsias and various climbing plants such as Virginia creeper and honeysuckle. Six yards from the maypole mound a privet hedge was planted in a circle, this would hide the people within from the general view when it was fully grown. Within this circle were forty-eight beds and, outside it, twelve "all differing in form, but answering to one pattern". These were planted with thorns, acacia, evergreens, weeping elms and ashes, juniper and yew.

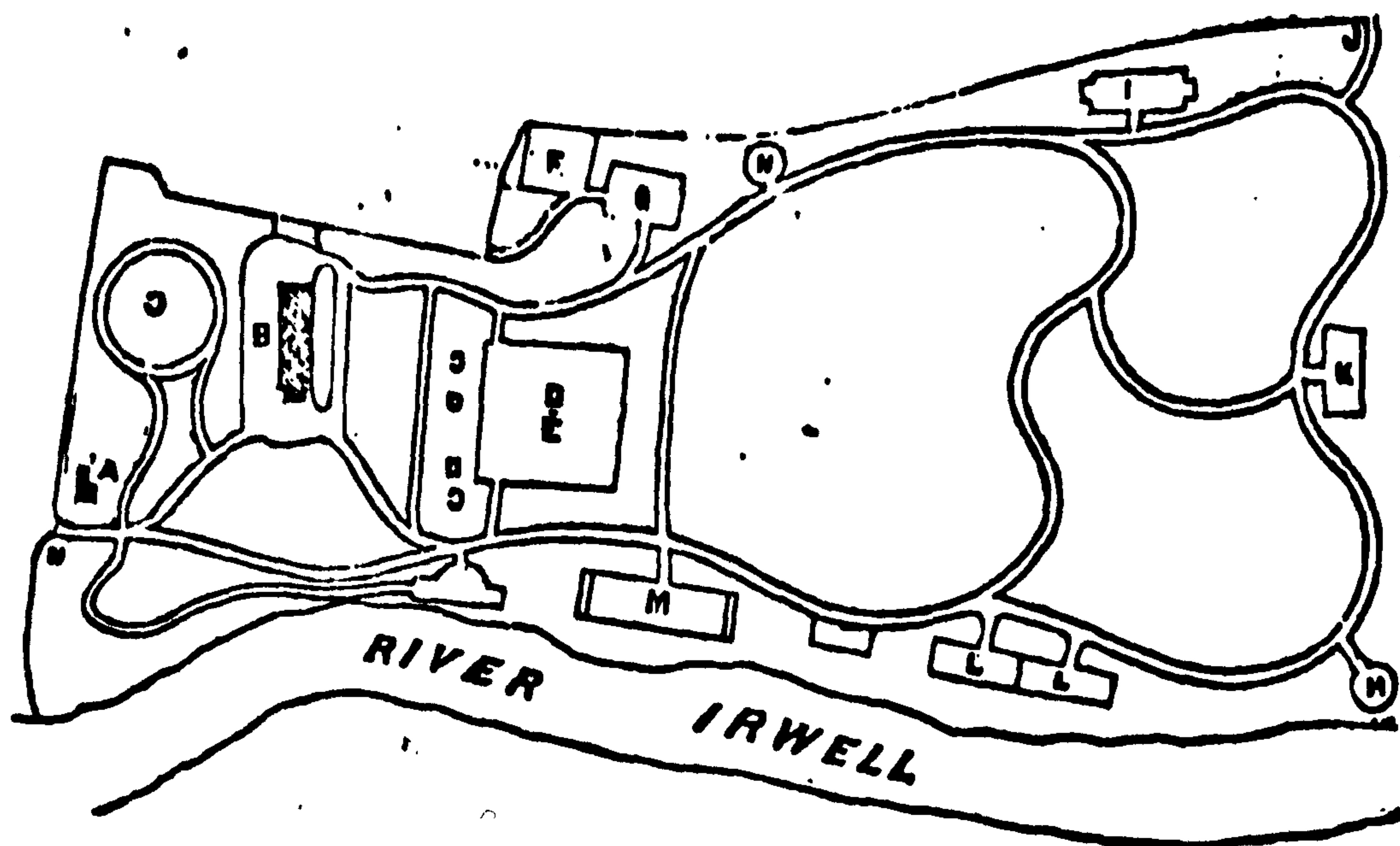
The best timbered park of the three was Queen's Park, and a belt of fully





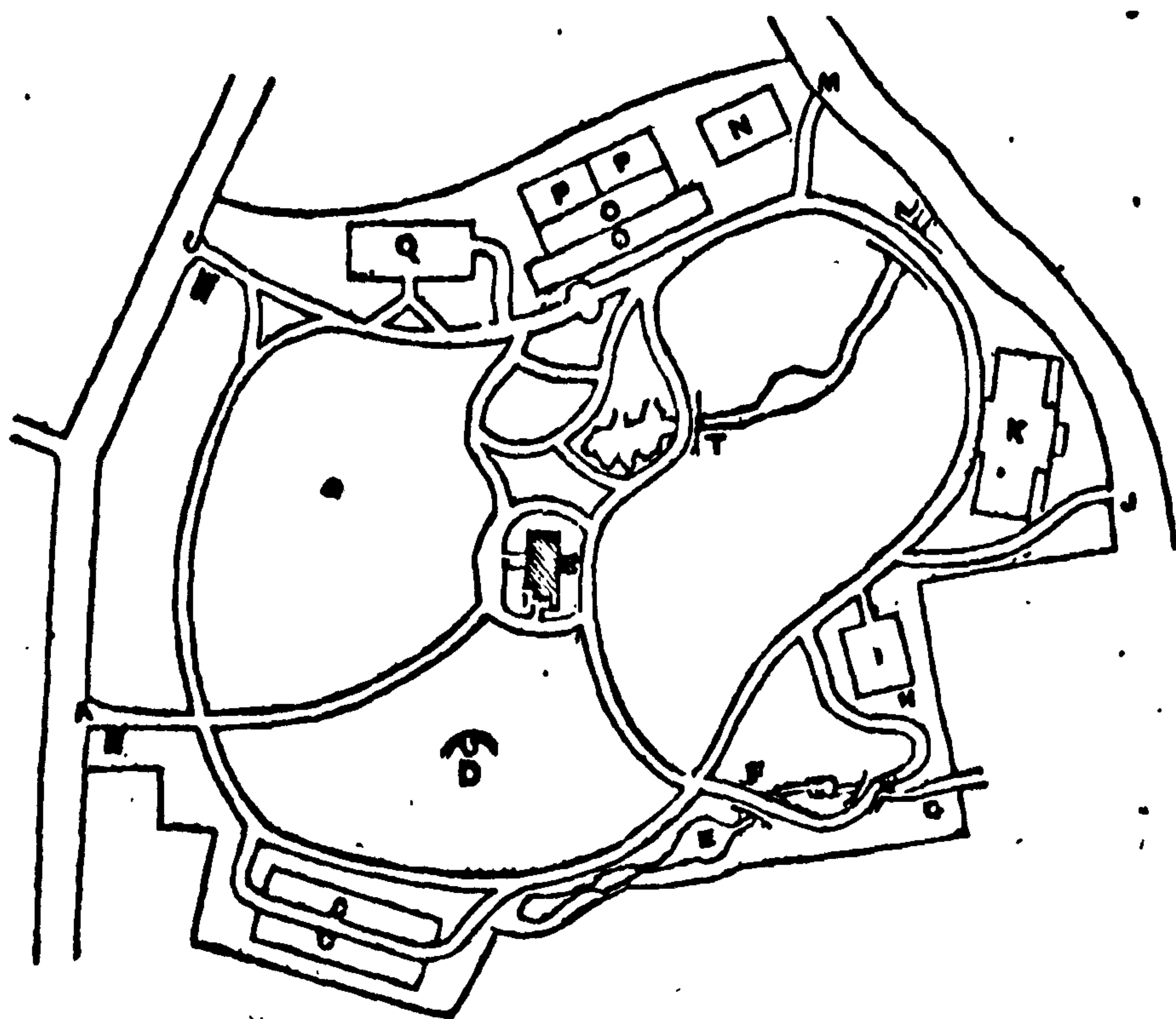
Figure 17 Queen's Park. Structure from which a bell was hung. This was rung to announce the imminent closure of the park.





**THE PEEL PARK.**

**A** Lodge; **B** Refreshment Rooms; **C** Flower Bed; **D** Quilt Alley; **E** Circular Swings; **F** Skipping Ropes, with Swing and See-Saws; **G** Entrance Gate; **H** Gymnasium; **I** & **J** Skittle Alleys; **K** Archery Ground; **L** Gate.



**THE QUEENS PARK.**

**A** Gate and Lodge; **B** Refreshment Rooms; **C** Rosarium; **D** Cricket Ground; **E** Pond filled up; **F** Circular Swings; **G** Seats; **H** Ball and Shuttle-cock Ground; **I** Entrance; **J** Skipping Rope and Swing Grounds; **K** Gate; **L** Shuttle-cock Ground; **M** & **N** Quilt Alley and Skittle Alley; **O** Archery Ground; **P** Bridge; **Q** Entrance Gate.



grown trees encircled it. Only minor alterations were carried out at this park in its first two years. These included filling in the pond and moving the boys' gymnasium from near the main entrance to near the Broughton Lane Gate (Figure 19, J).

Philips Park presented the greatest scope for the designer, because it was not already partially laid out and, in 1849, it presented:

the boldest and most romantic character of the three, consisting of high knolls, with much broken ground, and a pretty little amphitheatre sloping down to the river Medlock.<sup>70</sup>

A series of small lakes cascaded down from the high ground of the east of the park to the lower ground of the west (Figure 20). But the greatest alterations took place here within two years of its opening. In the original design, the skittle and archery grounds (Figure 21, GHH and I) were located in the valley of the park by the banks of the Medlock, "the most beautiful part of the park". By 1849 these had been moved and the whole area by the river drained and laid out as flower gardens. These included two hundred roses and annuals, various herbaceous plants, verbenas, hollyoaks (sic), pinks and dahlias and neat walks. Thus, instead of this area being the scene of:

men shouting under the excitement of the skittle ground or the unrestrained merriment of the factory girls who used the swings. It is now quiet and tranquil ...<sup>71</sup>

The girls' playground was moved to the site of the boys' playground, which was a short distance from the gymnasium (Figure 21, M), and the boys' playground became part of the boys' gymnasium site. The "excitement and unrestrained merriment" were thus relocated to be less visible and intrusive in order that the main quality of the park, quiet and tranquillity, should not be impaired.

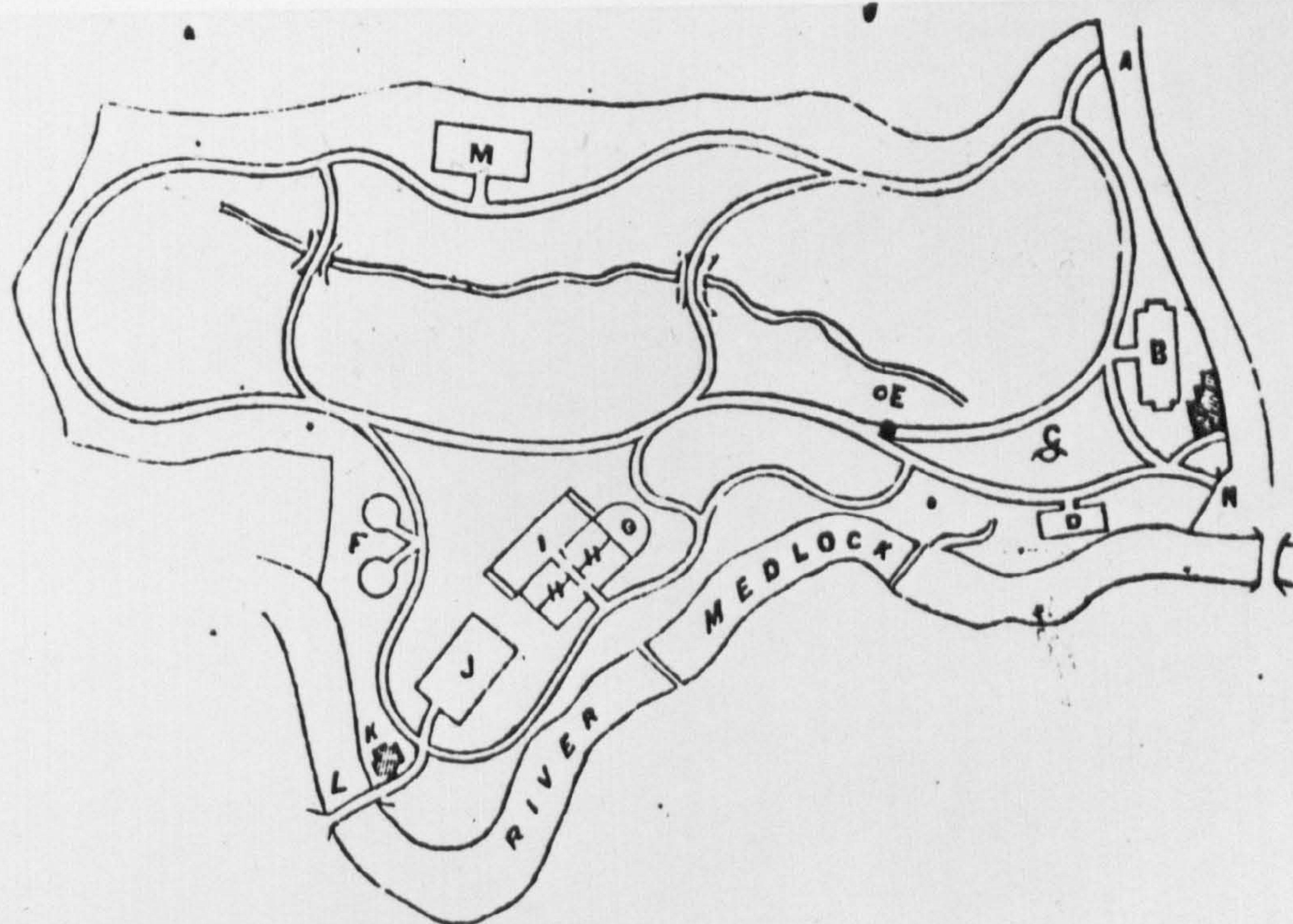
In order to keep the parks in good condition, it was recommended that the hedges should be cut twice a year and that borders, shrubberies and large beds should be thinned.<sup>72</sup> In the mid-1850s it was the custom in the Manchester parks to grow herbaceous plants and annuals among the trees and shrubs. As the annuals were in bloom for only a short period, the result was a "slovenly appearance" when their flowering season was over, so the Public Parks Committee recommended that "all the Margins of the Borders and large Beds be Grassed, the Grass losing itself under the branches of





Figure 20 Philips Park, O.S. 1890. The bandstand was a later addition

Figure 21 Philips Park, sketch plan c.1849 (Love and Barton)



#### THE PHILIPS PARK.

A Road ; B Ball and Shuttle-cock Ground for Girls ; C Compartment for Shuttle-cocks and Skipping Ropes ;  
D Quoit Alley ; E Ground for Shuttle-cock for Girls ; F Circular Swings for Boys ; G H Skittle Alley ;  
H Archery Ground ; I Bridge ; J Gymnasium.



the Evergreens", the result would be more natural, neater and easier to maintain. The sunniest positions should be chosen for the flower beds, which should be arranged so that they could be viewed from above. "What are called Bedding Plants are the most gay and remain the most blooming during the whole of the Summer and Autumn months".<sup>73</sup> The use of bedding plants was actively encouraged by the Committee in the mid-1850s.

One of the main problems of park maintenance was air pollution. The problem: of cultivating trees, shrubs and plants that could withstand the atmospheric conditions was met by "carefully selecting the sorts best adapted to the situations".<sup>74</sup> As a result of this policy, the healthy state of the rhododendrons in particular was noted.

Later a special sub-committee was set up to inspect the various industrial and chemical works in the vicinity of Philips Park, and to report on their influence on the vegetation and plants. The sub-committee had no doubt that the plants and trees did suffer considerably; the leaves on the trees in the most exposed parts of the park showed signs of "having been destroyed by chemical action". Indeed:

So considerable was the quantity of smoke sent over the Park during one of the visits from these works (Messrs. R. Johnson and Nephew), that the atmosphere was perfectly clouded by it, and the smell of the smoke was stifling. It is quite impossible that healthy vegetation can subsist with such atmospheric conditions, and the trees in the higher portion of the Park were severely suffering.<sup>75</sup>

But all that they could recommend was that greater care should be taken in the construction of those works and in the processes of manufacture. Ten years later another report was submitted on the problems of growing trees and plants in Manchester's atmosphere, and, if anything, the problem had become greater.

In a climate like that of Manchester, where the sun is, for the most part, obscured by rain or smoke-clouds, and where, even when those chemical rays which are the source of vegetable life do penetrate, they are compelled to struggle through an atmosphere charged, and unavoidably so, with large impurities, thus suffering, in the course of their passage, a serious diminution of their original vivifying power, and where every object is thickly coated with the solid matters constantly showering from the atmosphere, the culture of trees and plants generally cannot fail to be a most difficult problem. The climate, in fact,

has now become so hard to combat that, although we would fain report in a different sense, we are inevitably driven to the conclusion that if the struggle which the Parks Committee have for some time past maintained against the above adverse elements is to be continued with any prospect of success, still further and more strenuous efforts will require to be made by those upon whom the duty devolves of abating the smoke nuisance.<sup>76</sup>

Even the Eastern and Western plane trees (platanus orientalis and occidentalis) which thrived in London, could not withstand the atmosphere. The trees and shrubs which appeared to survive best were the Canadian and Abele poplar, North American thorns (Crataegus prunifolia, C. Crusgali), the common ash and common elder, especially Sambucus niger. The latter with its gold and silver leaved varieties was "The most desirable to be planted in the central parts of the city", together with privet, particularly Polygonum cuspidatum, "the best of all plants for the centres of great manufacturing towns". As well as the bad atmospheric conditions, trees had in addition to contend with their trunks being "scratched and lacerated" by cats, and the activities of children. Despite all these negative factors, it was hoped that the planting of trees and shrubs would make Manchester's "dingy streets and squares; if not attractive, at least somewhat less dreary than at present".<sup>77</sup>

### Conclusion

The aims of those promoting the Manchester/Salford parks were clearly stated, but how far those aims were achieved in the design and use of the parks is very debatable. The economic potential of park development was not one of the aims, only the sites of the parks were acquired and there was no land for building involved. One of the stated aims for the parks was to improve physical health by providing places for exercise and sources of fresh air. It was thought that users of the parks would benefit from the exercise of walking, riding or playing various games. In addition, the parks would provide reservoirs of fresh air which would benefit the users and renew the polluted air of the urban surroundings. This view was held despite the evidence of the plants and trees which succumbed in the unequal battle with pollution. In the initial proposals for the Manchester parks, it was suggested that there should be four parks, one for each side of the town. It was evident, therefore, that the question of park location was considered seriously. The three parks that were developed were towards the north and west of the town, so only the southern part was without its lung.



The parks were clearly seen by their promoters as providing a means for social contact between the classes which would lead to better understanding between them. In addition, they would provide an alternative form of recreation to the public house and a diversion from other pursuits. The effectiveness of these aims would depend to some extent on how much the parks were used by the various classes and, for working people, this would in turn depend on their proximity to working class districts. This question was seriously considered when the choice of park sites was made. The sites chosen were adjacent to working class areas but they were not immediately adjacent and it is not possible to tell how much they were in fact used by the people they were intended for. Their location together with the hours that they were open would indicate that the opportunities for working people to use them were rather limited.

Standards of behaviour were controlled by regulations governing the use of the parks. The parks were enclosed by fences and railings and the gates were opened and closed at specific hours, thus the regularity of the hours of use mirrored the regularity of the factory hours in the industry of Manchester. Not only was access strictly controlled, but games and sports were prohibited on Sundays, the one day when most working people had the opportunity of visiting the parks. The instructions to the designers was that the parks should include a wide variety of activities. Certain of these activities were for both sexes when young but, for older people, the activities were largely for males.

Behaviour in the parks was strictly controlled and no alcohol, swearing or gambling allowed. Although it was not a specific offence in 1846 to pick flowers or leaves, such offences were covered by the instructions to park-keepers to preserve order. When the first bye-laws were drawn up in 1868, the protection of buildings, animals, birds and fish, trees, shrubs and plants were included. In addition, these bye-laws stated that people who were not clean, or dressed in clean and decent clothes, could be excluded from the park (Bye-law No. 4). Thus, not only was behaviour controlled but also standards of appearance. Under both the 1846 regulations and the 1868 bye-laws, no dogs were admitted, and the 1868 bye-laws also banned the admission of horses and carriages, unless they had the sanction of the council.

The reorganisation of Philips Park within a couple of years of its opening,

clearly illustrates the dichotomy of goals within park design inherent in the Manchester/Salford parks from the start. Fresh air, contact with nature, and refreshment of the spirit, imply quiet and tranquility, particularly in the urban dweller's view of the countryside. One of the goals in providing parks was to provide the urban dweller with contact with nature, but the other goal of the Public Parks Committee was to provide as wide a variety of relaxation and exercise for as large a number of people as possible. Some physical exercise is quiet, especially when it involves only one or two people but, once a group or team is gathered, then noise is inevitable, particularly if the participants are young and energetic. Thus, within a couple of years of the park opening, we find a slight but significant alteration in emphasis regarding the objectives of park design. Action, noise and excitement were accommodated but only if they were literally peripheral to the main park.

If the aims of the Manchester park promoters are compared with those expressed during the second phase of park development, it is evident that, with the exception of the economic aspect, there are no clear distinctions to be made between them. In both the various roles of the park were given equal weight and the Manchester park promoters did not single out any particular aim for emphasis.

One other question regarding the Manchester/Salford parks must be considered, and that is the reason why Manchester was the first of the industrial towns to develop parks. Manchester had been drafting a local sanitary code and her reputation for local reform in the 1840s was growing. Parks could be seen as part of that process. Furthermore, it was in Manchester that the Peterloo massacre of 1819 had occurred, and Manchester was a strong centre for Chartist activity in the early 1840s, but so were other towns such as Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham and London.<sup>78</sup> In the regulations and bye-laws governing the use of parks, no reference was made to public assemblies. Chartist meetings were certainly held in Manchester in the 1840s but there is no reference to the parks being used. Chartist meetings were held in Salford in 1838 and 1839 on Kersal Moor. It would be unwise therefore to try to relate the development of the parks too closely to these particular events, or to deduce that the need to promote social control was given a higher priority in Manchester than elsewhere, although the development of parks evidently was. Contact between the classes could be minimised and, indeed, the layout of the town seemed designed for that purpose, as Frederick Engels



described so graphically.

The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with out-spoken conscious determination, the working-people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class; or, if this does not succeed, they are concealed with the cloak of charity ...<sup>79</sup>

William Farr's statistics on life expectancy in the various towns of England indicated Manchester's appalling record, and Engels vividly recorded the living conditions of working people in Manchester in The Condition of the Working Class in England, but these conditions were not significantly better in other major centres. The reasons why Manchester was the first of the industrial centres to develop municipal parks were complex, but it was certainly evident that by 1845 her lead in this matter was recognised.

The men of Manchester have well taken the lead in the movement ... public attention is awakened and a determined self-reliance ... pervades the communities who are moving.<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, Manchester's lead was contributing towards the movement for parks and thus was helping to promote development elsewhere.

## Notes and References

- 1 According to Redford and Russell, inspiration came to Mark Philips while he was recovering from illness in 1843, when he began to think about making better provision for the health and exercise of his constituents.  
Redford, A. and Russell, I.S. The History of Local Government in Manchester, Vol. II, Borough and City, London, 1940, p.216
- 2 Manchester Borough Council (MBC) Proceedings, 10 May 1843, pp.92-3
- 3 "The Public Parks, their Progress, Completion and Opening", Manchester Parks Committee Scrapbook, MS 352-7  
No details have been discovered to indicate why these particular towns were selected. The committee would undoubtedly have known of the development of Derby Arboretum in 1840; Edinburgh, Dublin, York, Glasgow and Canterbury were all major centres yet only Glasgow would seem to have shared similar problems regarding growth of population and industry as Manchester.
- 4 Report of the Proceedings of a Public Meeting held at the Town Hall, Manchester on 8 August 1844, for the Purpose of Adopting Measures for the Formation of Parks, Public Walks, etc. in the Vicinity of Manchester, p.9. Manchester Parks Committee Scrapbook (MPCS) MS 352-7
- 5 Lord Francis Egerton, 1800-1857 was a large local landowner and heir to the 8th Earl of Bridgewater who had died in 1829, and the other Member of Parliament for Manchester.
- 6 Report of the Proceedings of a Public Meeting ... op.cit. p.9
- 7 Ibid. p.15
- 8 Ibid. p.11
- 9 Ibid. p.17
- 10 Ibid. pp.18-9
- 11 The subscriptions received at the meeting were as follows:

J. Heywood	£300	Mark Philips	£1000
Sir T. Potter	£500	Sir B. Heywood	£1000
John Brooks	£500	J.C. Harter	£500
Townend & Hickson	£500	J. & N. Phillips & Co.	£500
T. Hoyle & Sons	£500	The Mayor	£200
Lord Egerton	£1000	Ald. Kershaw & Co.	£500
- 12 Letter from Sir Robert Peel to Malcolm Ross and Edward Watkin, 7 September 1844. Quoted in The Christian Reformer, Vol. 1, No. 2, February 1845, p.77
- 13 Report of the Proceedings of a Public Meeting ... op.cit. p.21  
The full committee consisted of:



The Worshipful the Mayor (for the time being)	Thomas Townend, Esq.
The Right. Hon. Lord Francis Egerton, M.P.	James Consterdine, Esq.
Mark Philips, Esq., M.P.	Edward Watkin, Esq.
The Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of Manchester.	George Barbour, Esq.
Sir Benjamin Heywood, Bart.	Samuel Fletcher, Esq.
Sir Thomas Potter, Knight	James C. Harter, Esq.
James Atherton, Esq.	Mr. Alderman Kershaw.
Richard Birley, Esq.	Daniel Lee, Esq.
Daniel Grant, Esq.	Malcolm Ross, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Kay.	The Rev. Canon Wray.
Edward Loyd, Esq.	James Heywood, Esq.
	Mr. Alderman Neild.
	The Rev. Canon Clifton, and
	The Town Clerk.

Only the Mayor, Town Clerk and Aldermen were members of the Borough Council, the rest were important citizens of Manchester.

- 14 Notice, Public Walks, Parks, Gardens and Playgrounds, 22 August 1844, MPCS, MS 352-7
- 15 Address, Public Parks, Walks, etc. "To the Working Classes of Manchester and Salford, adopted at an Aggregate Meeting of the Operatives of both Towns, held in the Free Trade Hall", 10 September 1844. MPCS, MS 352-7
- 16 Report of the Proceedings of a Public Meeting ....op.cit. p.22
- 17 Public Parks etc. Subscriptions. MPCS, MS 352-7

	£	s	d
Amount already advertised	31438	14	11
Samuel Gratrix, Esq. Alport Town, Deansgate.	10	10	0
Messrs. Meyer and Oppenheim, Lever-street.	10	0	0
Messrs. Steinthal and Hallé, Brazenose-street.	10	0	0
C.H. Cope, Esq. Princess-Street.	10	0	0
Messrs. John and William Wood, King-street.	5	0	0
P.W. Danby, Esq. Broughton Lane.	5	0	0
John King, Esq. St. Ann's Square.	5	0	0
Messrs. John Ford & Co. St. Ann's Square.	5	0	0
Messrs. Irwin and Chester, Fountain-street.	5	0	0
Messrs. Vernon, Marchanton, and Edge, David-street.	5	0	0
Rev. Daniel Hearne, St. Patrick's	3	3	0
Earle Langston, Esq. Abraham's Court.	2	2	0
Messrs. Lowes and Co. Bond-street	2	2	0
Workmen in employ of do	1	1	0
Thomas Baker, Esq. Princess-street.	2	2	0
Messrs. Sharp and Scott, Market-street.	2	2	0
Mr. James Clough, Market-street.	2	0	0
Messrs. T. and R. Ross, Callender-street.	2	0	0
Mr. John Lees, Palace-street.	1	1	0
Mr. J.H. Leresche, Market-street.	1	1	0
Messrs. Fotiadi, Pananidi, Princess-street.	1	1	0
R.W. Brown-street.	1	1	0
Mrs. Margaret Hoyle, Portland-street.		10	0
A Friend, Deansgate.		10	0
Samuel Ollerenshaw, Faulkner-street.		10	0
Mr. D. Fielding, Great Jackson-street.		5	0



18 Ibid.

Subscription at the Warehouse of Mr. Henry Bollard, Mosley-Street.

A Friend	£1	0	0	
A Friend		5	0	
A Friend		5	0	
Three small subscriptions		<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	1 15 6

Subscription at the Warehouse of Messrs. J. and N. Philips and Co.  
Church Street

In addition to former amount of £223 11s 6d.

Mr. Collier.	0	10	6	
Mr. Denbigh.		10	0	
Mr. Clough.		10	0	
Mr. Keeling.		5	0	
Mr. Perkins.		5	0	
Mr. Merrill.		<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	2 5 6

19 Ibid.

Subscription of the Workmen in the Employ of Messrs. M'Connel and Co. Ancoats.

Mr. P. Mallon	0	10	0	
Mr. George Forbes.		10	0	
Mr. William Turner.		5	0	
127 small subscriptions under 5s. each	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	7 16 7

20 Faucher, L. Manchester in 1844, London, 1844, 1969 edition,  
footnote 24, p.55

21 The Builder, Vol. 3, No. 124, 26 April 1845, p.292

22 Letter from Alexander Kay, Mayor, to the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel,  
26 May 1845. MPCS, MS 352-7

23 Letter from Sir Robert Peel, 29 May 1845. Quoted in The Builder,  
Vol. 3, No. 124, 21 June 1845, p.293

24 Memorandum, Public Parks, Walks, Playgrounds, etc., 21 November 1844,  
MPCS, MS 352-7

25 Letter from Alexander Kay, op.cit. According to Axon, W.E.A. op.cit.  
p.232, the Lark Hill estate of 32 acres was purchased from W. Garnett  
for £5000 from which £500 was deducted as Mr. Garnett's contribution  
to the subscription fund. Walness Meadow, 25 acres, was bought for  
£5,875.

26 A Few Pages About Manchester, Manchester, c.1849, p.28

27 MBC Proceedings, 6 August 1845, p.181

28 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.30

29 Ibid.



- 30 Memorandum, Public Parks, Walks, Play-Grounds, etc., op.cit.
- 31 Instructions to Competitors, 18 August 1845. MPCS, MS 352-7
- 32 None of these has so far been located
- 33 "Designs for laying out the public parks at Manchester",  
The Builder, Vol. 3, No. 144, 8 November 1845, p.541
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 The nine entries were from James Pringle, York; H. Bigland & Co. Manchester; Richard Forrest, London; Thos. Diggles, Singleton, W. Manchester; P. & H. Richardson, Nr. Ardwick, W. Manchester; N. Niven, Dublin; Robert Rea, Cirencester; George Towers, Rose Hill; Joshua Major & Son, Knowstrop, Nr. Leeds.
- 36 Memorandum of Agreement between the Committee of the Public Parks and Joshua Major & Son, Knowstrop, Nr. Leeds.  
MCPS, MS 352-7
- 37 Manchester Public Parks Committee, 5 December 1845. MPCS, MS 352-7 M5
- 38 Major set out his ideas on landscape gardening in The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, London, 1852. It is clear that he was fully aware of the picturesque controversy of the 1790s and that he disagreed with the theories on the picturesque put forward by Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price. Major's theories of landscape gardening accorded to the principles set out by Humphry Repton and developed by John Claudius Loudon, who was Major's contemporary. Near the main house, in private developments, the specific garden or kept ground should be orderly and neat and should provide architectonic support in the immediate surroundings to the house, while in the pleasure grounds, ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers should be displayed so that their natural beauty could be appreciated. This was the essence of the Gardenesque.
- The English or Natural Flower garden ... is composed of lawn, and beds or patches of earth, in which flowers and flowering shrubs are planted ... This kind of garden, when space will allow, may be subdivided into the following compartments, namely, - The General Flower Garden, American Garden, Florist Garden, Rosarium, Annual Garden and Group Garden, which, though severally quite distinct and perfectly complete, need only to be separated by walks assisted by a judicious disposal of various masses and groups of shrubs and low trees, in order to produce one interesting whole. (p.28)
- 39 Major, op.cit. p.27
- 40 The danger of these archery grounds was noted in the Manchester Public Park Committee (MPPC) Minute Books, 1847
- 41 Labyrinth, an intricate structure of intercommunicating passages, through which it is difficult to find one's path without a clue. OED. Maze, Late Medieval term for the windings of a labyrinth. OED.

- 42 MPPC Minute Books, Vol. 1, 1852 and 1853
- 43 Ibid. Vol. 3, 1860 and 1861
- 44 Ibid. Vol. 3, 26 October 1855, p.153
- 45 Major, op.cit. p.193 Although Major considered football, there is no record of its being played in these parks.
- 46 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.30
- 47 MPPC Minute Book, Vol. 3, 26 October 1855, p.155
- 48 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 1, 11 September 1846, p.35  
It was noted in 1846 that part of the iron railings had only one coat of paint and required finishing.
- 49 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.222
- 50 Ibid. p.194
- 51 MBC Proceedings, 2 May 1846, p.136
- 52 MBC Proceedings, 6 July 1846, p.142
- 53 MBC Proceedings, 6 August 1845, p.181
- 54 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 1, 26 August 1846  
The new Public Parks Committee comprised the Mayor, Aldermen Burd, Kay and Kershaw, and Councillors Prentice, Shawcross and Stacy.
- 55 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.195
- 56 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.221
- 57 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 1, 27 November 1846, p.43
- 58 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.222
- 59 MPPC Minute Book, Vol. 3, 26 October 1855, p.156
- 60 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.222
- 61 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 1, 11 September 1846, p.12
- 62 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.223-4
- 63 MPPC Minute Book, Vol. 1, 20 August 1847, p.102
- 64 MBC Proceedings, 6 August 1845, p.181
- 65 MPPC Minute Book, Vol. 1, 31 August 1846
- 66 MBC Proceedings, 18 September 1846, p.223



- 67 The hours of employment of park keepers and attendants in 1848 were 6.00 a.m. to dark in the spring, 5.00 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. in the summer, 5.00 a.m. to dark in the autumn, and 7.00 a.m. to dark in the winter.  
MPPC Minute Books, Vol. 1, 1848
- 68 Park Bye-laws, Manchester City Council (MCC) Minutes, 4 March 1868
1. In construing these bye-laws the expression "the Park" shall mean, comprise, and apply to every public park or place of recreation now or hereafter belonging to or vested in or under the control of the Corporation, either within or beyond the limits of the said city; and all words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, and the singular to include the plural, and the plural the singular, unless the contrary as to gender or number is expressly provided.
  2. Every person (except the officers and servants of the Corporation) shall leave the park by the time the bell, which is rung for fifteen minutes before the closing of the same, has ceased to ring.
  3. Every person who, in the park, shall conduct himself in a disorderly manner, or shall be intoxicated, or guilty of gambling, or shall use any improper or indecent language, or shall occasion any nuisance or annoyance therein, or shall sell or offer to sell any refreshment except as authorised, or shall take any dog into the park, or if a male shall intrude on or use any playground or place set apart for the use of females, or if a female shall intrude on or use any playground or place set apart for the use of males, or shall, without the sanction of the Council, take any vehicle or horse into the park, or shall destroy or injure any tree, shrub, plant, or flower, or pluck any flowers or leaves, or shall take or disturb the nest of any bird, or shall obstruct, hinder, or prevent any officer or servant of the Corporation in the execution of his duty, or who, on Sunday shall use any playground, or play at any game, or play any music or musical instrument, shall for each and every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding the penalty hereinafter mentioned.
  4. Any officer or servant of the Corporation may exclude any person from the park who is offensively dirty, or not dressed in decent clothes, and may also remove therefrom any person who shall be guilty of any breach of the bye-laws for the time being in force, or any part thereof.
  5. The penalty for every breach or non-observance of any and every part of the foregoing bye-laws shall be any sum not exceeding five pounds, and the Justices before whom any penalty enforced by these bye-laws is sought to be recovered may order the whole or part only of such penalty to be paid, or may remit the whole penalty.
- 69 These are summarised in A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. The authors provide a description of each park on the occasion of the official opening ceremony, and follow this with a description of the alterations abridged from the Manchester Courier, May 2 and 9, 1849.
- 70 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.31
- 71 Ibid. p.32

- 72 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 3, 26 October 1855, p.157
- 73 Ibid. p.222
- 74 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 3, 26 September 1855, p.211
- 75 MCC Proceedings, Parks and Cemeteries Committee, Sub-Committee Report, 6 August 1873, p.377
- 76 MCC Proceedings, Parks and Cemeteries Committee Report, 6 February 1884, p.136
- 77 Ibid. p.137
- 78 Thompson, D. The Chartists, London, 1984, pp.341-68
- 79 Engels, F. The Condition of the Working Class in England, London, 1968 edition, pp.78-9
- 80 The Christian Reformer, op.cit. p.77



## SECTION II

In this section a thematic approach is adopted. In Chapter Five the pattern of municipal park development 1845-80 is established in order to identify those towns that were active in this matter and their geographical distribution. The various means by which municipal parks were achieved will be examined in order to identify some of the problems encountered and the solutions adopted.

Park design, park use, and attitudes towards recreation are interrelated; however, by investigating these areas separately it will be possible to identify some of the major factors influencing them. In Chapter Six park design will be examined in the period circa 1845-80 by focussing on some of the earliest municipal parks initiated in the 1840s. The main features of their design will be identified and compared with the Manchester/Salford parks. Chapter Seven will focus on ruling class attitudes towards working class recreation. The changes in the working day, week, and statutory holidays will be examined in order to identify what the opportunities for working class recreation were. The contribution of the Sabbatarians and the Temperance movement and their effects on park facilities will be analysed. The ways in which working class recreation was seen as a "problem" by the ruling class gave no indication as to how parks could "solve" these problems. In Chapter Eight the uses of the parks will be examined in order to determine how choices were made between various activities, and what the significance of these choices was in social and political terms.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PARK ACQUISITION 1845-1880

In the first phase of park development one municipal park was developed, while in the second phase Southampton and Edinburgh opened municipal parks and Birkenhead was in process of doing so. By 1845 commentators noted that the park movement was under way and that Manchester was giving a lead to other towns. A public meeting to promote the development of parks was held in Oldham in 1846 and £1,400 was raised.<sup>1</sup> Indeed a year earlier a contemporary source noted that Oldham was "organising resources for public walks" and in Bolton, Stockport, Aston, Blackburn and several other neighbouring towns "a movement is beginning." Further afield, Birmingham had held "a magnificent meeting" and several thousand pounds for public walks and baths had been subscribed.<sup>2</sup>

These initiatives indicated that a number of towns intended to acquire municipal parks, but between the intention and the realisation there was often a considerable time lag. Oldham opened its first municipal park, Alexandra Park, in 1865<sup>3</sup> and Bolton opened Queen's Park and Heywood Recreation Ground the following year.<sup>4</sup> In the cases of Stockport and Blackburn, the delays were not so severe for Stockport's first park opened in 1858<sup>5</sup> and Corporation Park, Blackburn opened in 1857<sup>6</sup>. In Birmingham matters were complicated by the decision to lease two parks in 1856 and 1857 and these only became municipal parks in 1871.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for the delays varied from town to town and the variety of means and justifications used to acquire parks indicate the range of problems encountered and the solutions sought.

From 1845 the number of municipal parks increased steadily. Indeed so many developed that it was evident that it would not be possible or sensible to study them all. The parks examined in the first and second phases showed that various forms of public park were acquired by a variety of means. An examination of the means by which municipal parks were acquired will reveal whether they were the result of the efforts of local government, benefactors, or other agencies. The parks chosen for discussion are those that best illustrate the range of problems encountered. The establishment of the pattern of municipal park



acquisition will make it possible to identify a chronology of municipal effort and from this the geographical distribution of towns active in the development of municipal parks can be determined. Because of the number of parks and towns involved, this is divided into two phases 1845-59 and 1860-80 (Appendix IV). If the location of these parks within the urban fabric is examined it will be possible to see how far the recommendations of the SCPW, that parks should be adjacent to populations of working people, was put into effect and to what extent choice in the location of parks existed.

### Methods of Park Acquisition

The main methods of public park acquisition established in the first and second phases of park development were enclosure by the local authority (Preston, Southampton), leasing (Bath), gifts (Derby, Sheffield), speculative development (Liverpool) and royal parks (Regent's Park, which was also a speculative development). The resulting public parks included royal parks, semi-public parks, such as Derby Arboretum, and municipal parks.

### Royal Parks

Royal parks may be divided into two main types: those that were royal parks and still are to this day, e.g. Regent's Park and Hyde Park, and those that ultimately became municipal parks. The London parks that opened in this period, which included Victoria Park, Kennington and Battersea Parks, remained royal parks only until 1887 when they passed to the Metropolitan Board of Works and became municipal parks. Their changing status related to the way in which the local government of London was organised in this period.

Royal parks and other crown lands were placed "in the care of the nation" on the accession of each monarch. Land which provided a source of revenue was managed by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, and Victoria Park, for example, came under their responsibility until 1854. It then passed to the Commissioners of Works and Public Buildings who had responsibility for royal parks and other crown land which did not provide a source of revenue.<sup>8</sup> In 1855 the Metropolitan Board of Works was formed to replace the old local bodies which had been responsible for the local government of London but, as Victoria Park was a royal park, it did not come under

their control.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, it remained where it had been and expenses for it continued to be borne by the Treasury. This situation continued until 1887 when, with the passing of the Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) Act,<sup>10</sup> Victoria Park passed to the Metropolitan Board of Works. In doing so it changed its status from a royal park maintained financially by the Treasury to that of a municipal park maintained out of the rates. The following year, 1888 the London County Council came into being and in 1892 the L.C.C. created its Parks Department and all London parks came under its control.<sup>11</sup>

### Gifts

In the period 1845-59 two gifts of municipal parks have been identified, the People's Park, Halifax, 1857 and Vernon Park, Stockport, 1858 (Appendix IV). In Halifax Francis Crossley, MP had acquired the Belle Vue estate and enlarged the house on it in 1849. The site that was to form the park lay to the south of Belle Vue House (Figure 22). The almshouses to the east of the house were built in 1855 to form part of the setting to the estate and as a visual boundary to the housing behind. The People's Park was presented to the town in 1857. Francis Crossley provided an estimated £40,000 for the land and the twelve and a half acre site of five flat fields was laid out by Joseph Paxton assisted by Edward Milner.

Figure 23 shows the park at the time of its opening. Belle Vue House can be seen on the far right and the park appears as an extension of its grounds. The west side of the park was bounded by a terrace with statues at intervals and, in the centre of the terrace, a stone pavilion provided shelter. On the lower, eastern side of the park was a series of lakes, the largest with an island in it. Between the lakes and the terrace was a fountain, but a certain amount of artistic license seems to have been applied to the height of the jet in this illustration. The park was basically symmetrical about its east/west axis.

A condition of the gift was that the Corporation had to guarantee that they would spend not less than £315 p.a. to keep the park in order. Ten years later, in 1867 Sir Francis, as he had by then become, donated £6,300 to provide an investment for maintaining the park.<sup>12</sup> The benefits to Sir Francis can be seen more clearly if the land adjoining



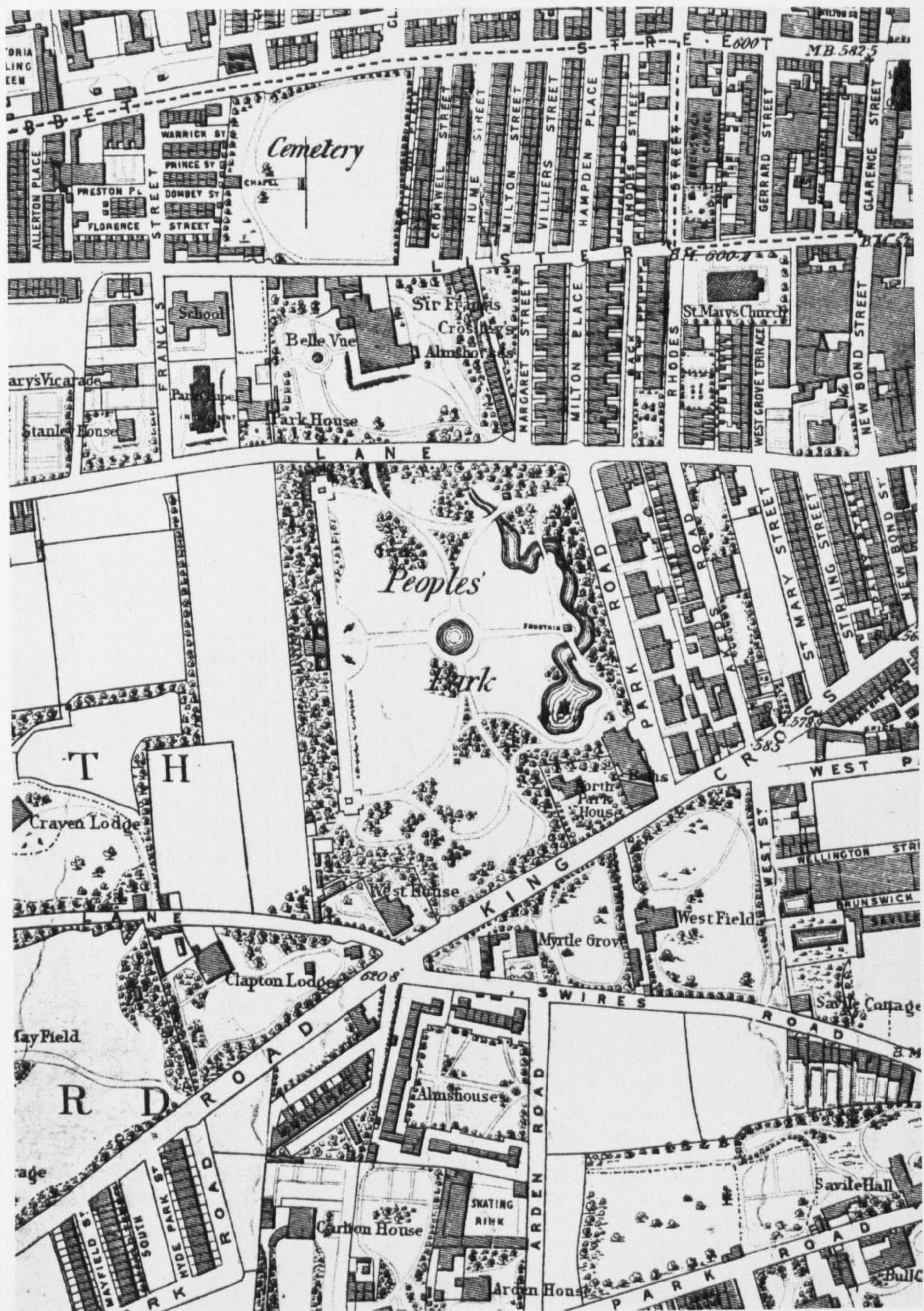


Figure 22 People's Park, Halifax (O.S. 1885)





Figure 23 People's Park, Halifax, 1857 (Illustrated London News, 22 August, 1857, p.188)



the park is examined more closely. On the eastern boundary Park Road was developed as a speculative venture by Sir Francis, the twelve sites being sold for development in 1858.<sup>13</sup> If the scale of these houses and their plots are compared with those of the housing to the north and east of the site then the effect of park development on land value becomes visually apparent. This increase in land value accrued to Sir Francis.

The conditions regulating the use of the park were laid down by Sir Francis:

- 1 This Park is open to the Public every day throughout the year, from morning until evening.
- 2 No games are allowed of any kind, nor yet dancing, but bands of music are permitted to perform under fixed regulations.
- 3 Bathing in the lakes is strictly prohibited.
- 4 The Public are requested to keep to the walks, not to pluck flowers, or break the shrubs or trees.
- 5 Writing on the stone or woodwork, and cutting names in the buildings, seats, trees, are strictly prohibited.
- 6 No dogs are admitted except held by a string.
- 7 A bell is rung ten minutes before the final closing of the gates, and the Public are requested to leave the Park when that signal is given.
- 8 It is expected that the Public will protect what is intended for their own enjoyment.<sup>14</sup>

In forbidding all games and restricting visitors to walking on the paths and not on the grass, this park had much more stringent regulations regarding use compared with other parks of this period. The benefactor could and did, in this instance, control the types of activity allowed in the park. He also benefitted financially from the development of the park because he kept control of part of the land adjoining it.

Lord Vernon also benefitted from his gift to Stockport. In 1844 a memorandum was signed on his behalf, and on behalf of the Corporation:

Lord Vernon to give for the public purposes of public walks and as a place of outdoor exercise such portions of the fields ... known (as) 'Stringer's Fields' ...

The Corporation to be Trustees for such purposes. A sufficient plot of land to be reserved from this grant along the side of New Zealand Road and New Bridge Lane for Lord Vernon's building purposes.<sup>15</sup>

The land, however, could not be alienated until Lord Vernon came of age

in 1851, when the gift was accepted. For several years the land remained in its original state "chiefly from unwillingness on the part of the majority to spend so much unproductive money". But in 1857 the layout of the park was precipitated by the purchase of 47,000 trees and shrubs by the Markets Committee. Despite opposition this purchase was confirmed by the Council, and a plan for the layout of the park was submitted to the Council on 3 February 1858. It was agreed that £300 be allowed to carry out improvements, and this sum was supplemented by gifts of further trees, plants, fountains, seats, etc., together with two Russian guns captured in the Crimean war and donated by Lord Panmure. The park was opened on 20 September 1858, the anniversary of the battle of Alma.

As can be seen from Appendix IV, the number of gifts of parks increased substantially in the period 1860-80 in comparison with the preceding period 1845-59. This increase of activity on the part of benefactors was partly due to the legislation passed in 1859 and 1860 (see Chapter Nine). The parks donated in that period ranged in size from the two acres of Darbshire Recreation Ground at Bolton to the seventy-two acres of Albert Park, Middlesborough. Three sides of Albert Park were reserved by the donor for building "villa residences".<sup>16</sup>

If we consider these gifts from the point of view of the need to locate them near to the populations they were to serve, the points that emerge are that where parks were donated there was little or no choice of location, and it was a rare event for a town to be offered several sites and to be able to choose between them. Even if several sites were offered, as was the case in Hull in 1860, where two sites of ten acres were offered for sale, when the offer of the gift of twenty-seven acres was made this was accepted.<sup>17</sup> There is no evidence that this choice was influenced by the location of the park or its proximity to working class districts. Indeed, the "most notable developments in middle class housing" occurred in the area of this park in Hull, for Z.C. Pearson, twice mayor of Hull, retained ten acres surrounding the site, and laid out building plots on its north, south and east sides.<sup>18</sup> The project, however, seems to have run into difficulties for, at the time of the formal opening of the park, Mr Pearson's financial affairs were being investigated by the London Bankruptcy Court and he was unable to be present.<sup>19</sup>



## Leases

Some towns, such as Birmingham, elected to obtain municipal parks through the method of leasing them. Adderley Park was opened to the public in 1856 and Calthorpe Park the following year. Both of these became municipal parks in 1871. However, Birmingham does not appear to have set out with the intention of leasing in mind, for a report in 1845 noted that "a magnificent meeting, has already subscribed several thousand pounds for public walks and baths",<sup>20</sup> and a committee had been appointed in 1844 to obtain a park. Some £6,000 was raised, but it was used in 1846 to buy the site of the Kent Street Baths.<sup>21</sup>

The next attempt by Birmingham Town Council to secure a park occurred in 1850 when the Council made an unsuccessful offer not to lease but to buy Aston Hall Park. Two years later yet another attempt was made to acquire a site when Samuel Beale, the Major of Birmingham and Chairman of Midland Railway, proposed that 250 acres of land should be acquired at Sutton Park. Beale proposed that the site be leased for 999 years at 1/- an acre and that a Crystal Palace should be erected on it. The Corporation of Sutton, however, refused to grant a lease of longer than 99 years or to let the land at a price less than £1 per acre, and the project was abandoned.<sup>22</sup> The evidence from these two abortive examples seems to indicate that the Council had no particular preference for buying or leasing a site, provided that the terms were right. In 1855 Adderley Park, Saltley was offered to Birmingham as a gift on condition that the Council lay it out appropriately and permit the donor, Charles Bowyer Adderley, a voice in running it and framing the regulations, but the Council were not very enthusiastic about this suggestion and declined it. Later that year Adderley wrote again saying that his motives had been misunderstood, he was making a virtually free gift and, if the Council would not take the land over, he would himself set it apart for use as a public playground. The Council accepted this offer in modified form with a lease of 999 years at a peppercorn rent of 5/- per year and the park opened on 30 August 1856.<sup>23</sup>

On 1 April 1856 Birmingham General Purposes Committee presented a report to the Council of an offer by Lord Calthorpe to let land off Pershore Road of between twenty and thirty acres, for public recreation on an experimental basis, for one year at a rent of £3 per acre.<sup>24</sup> The Council was not



overwhelmed and requested modification of proposals and no legal agreement, and this was accepted. On 1 June 1857, Calthorpe Park was officially opened by the Duke of Cambridge with the Council in effect the tenant of the park at rent of £5 p.a. but there was no legal agreement.

The Calthorpe and Saltley (i.e. Adderley) Parks, useful as they are ... are not the property of the town, and only their use is given by their proprietors; they may at any time be reclaimed and taken from the town. This is not a thing likely to occur, but there is nothing absolutely to prevent it. What is needed ... is the unalienable right to such parks ...<sup>25</sup>

A deputation from the Council visited Lord Calthorpe in 1862 but he declined to enter into a legal agreement and the position remained unchanged until his death in 1868. Negotiations were reopened in 1870 with the succeeding Lord Calthorpe, who offered to grant a lease of twenty-one years at a rent of £300 p.a. with an honourable understanding that £295 be returned to the Council. The Council declined this offer and the Baths and Parks Committee were requested to seek an interview with Lord Calthorpe to resolve the matter. On 22 August 1871, they reported that the grant of the park to the Council had been made and Lord Calthorpe had divested himself of all existing and future interest in the land.<sup>26</sup>

Both Adderley and Calthorpe parks were leased until 1871. That is, their use was leased by their owners to the town, they were not the property of the town and the sites could, if the owners so wished, be reclaimed at any time, for there was nothing in law to prevent this. It seems from the evidence that it was not so much a preference on Birmingham Council's part to acquire parks by leasing, as a matter of making the best of the opportunities as they arose. They were offered leases on parks rather than gifts and, after negotiations to improve the terms of the lease, proceeded with this method of acquiring parks for the time being.

#### Limited Companies

It was not until 1864 that Birmingham acquired its first municipal park, Aston Hall Park, through its own local efforts. Aston Hall had been built by the Holte family in 1618 and had remained in their possession



until 1782. In 1817 it was purchased as a speculation by a firm of Warwick bankers, Greenway, Greaves and Whitehead and the hall was let to various tenants while Birmingham Freehold Land & Building Society acquired areas of the estate for development. The streets for this development were being planned by 1850 and the attention of the Council was drawn towards acquiring the estate. The Council offered £25,000 in 1850 for eighty-two acres surrounding Aston Hall; however, the owners were asking £60,000 and the Council's offer was not accepted.<sup>27</sup> The method by which Birmingham acquired Aston Hall Park provides an interesting variation on the ways in which local authorities raised money at this time. Initiative for the project dated from 1857 when George Dawson the non-conformist lecturer, politician, and preacher, chaired a meeting whose object was "to get Birmingham a park worthy of its name".<sup>28</sup> A General Committee and a Working Man's Committee were formed and it was decided to form a limited company and raise money by selling 40,000 shares of 1 guinea. The shares were divided into three classes: Type A entitled the holders to personal admission and certain other privileges but not dividends; Type B represented donations which were to be vested in trustees and the dividends kept as a sinking fund for the purchase of other shares "so that Aston Hall and Park may ultimately become free for all";<sup>29</sup> Type C were ordinary shares which gave the holders dividends but not the privileges of Class A.

By 1858 more than 18,000 shares had been applied for and the Working Man's Committee had "secured a fund of £600" and were canvassing the whole of the town.<sup>30</sup> Bankers, merchants, manufacturers and noblemen were "largely subscribing to Class B". Aston Hall Park was opened to the public in 1858, but an entrance fee was charged until 1864 when the purchase of the site was completed by the Council. The company was wound up in 1866.<sup>31</sup>

The question of whether this method of fund-raising for the purchase of Aston Hall Park was related to the organisation of work and relations between the different sections of society in Birmingham should be considered. The basis of production in Birmingham was the small-scale workshop and a large proportion of the working population consisted of artisans. Some historians have identified Birmingham as a place where co-operation between masters and working people was fostered by the small-scale workshops, and where artisans were "more petty bourgeois



than proletarian".<sup>32</sup> From this it could be argued that the mode of raising funds by shares corresponded with middle and ruling class experience, and appealed to the middle class aspirations of the artisans. But another side to relationships in the workshops existed:

the acting 'master' ... was exacting and always spoke with harshness. I saw old men who were in such terror at his approach that they would strike their hands, instead of the chisel they were using, and were afraid of dismissal or reduction of wages in consequence of the incapacity which he had witnessed, and which his presence had caused,<sup>33</sup>

It would therefore be unwise to draw too firm a connection between this mode of raising funds to acquire parks in Birmingham and the structure of work there. The point that comes over most clearly from the problems associated with leasing parks in Birmingham was the need to establish unalienable rights of access. Leasing did not solve this problem, neither did the gift of parks unless the gift was an outright one.

#### Direct Purchase by Municipality

Direct purchase by the municipality proved to be the most successful method of park acquisition in the period 1845-59 and in the period 1860-80 if this is measured in terms of the number of parks opened free to the public, and more parks were acquired by this method than by gifts or leases (Appendix IV). Municipalities involved in direct purchase of land for parks were affected by the legislation governing the permitted uses of the rates (see Chapter Nine) and by problems concerning justification of expenditure and recoupment of that expenditure if possible. In particular, between 1860 and 1875, rates could not be used for acquiring, improving or maintaining land for parks unless half the estimated cost of development was raised either by public subscription, donation, or other means, which were not specified. The methods adopted took several forms: one method established in Manchester was to raise the money by subscription and to apply for a grant from Parliament so that none of the costs of acquisition was met by the municipality. Bradford appears to have acquired its park by a similar method as those at Manchester and Salford, that is direct purchase by means of public subscription. Peel Park, Bradford opened to the public in 1850. The initiative for its acquisition came largely from the Mayor of Bradford, Sir Titus Salt, who contributed £1,000 to the project and persuaded other wealthy residents to subscribe.



The site of Bolton House estate which formed the fifty-six acre park lay on the boundaries of Bradford and Bolton and was already laid out and planted. This was acquired for £12,000.<sup>34</sup> The trustees appointed by the subscribers spent an additional £6,000 on its subsequent development and two of the trustees, W.B. Addison and H. Brown, successfully applied for a grant of £1,500 from the Government fund of £10,000 to assist in this development. In 1863 the park was conveyed to the Corporation. The features of the park included a lake and drinking fountains, but facilities for games were not really provided until 1912 when the provisions for cricket, football, hockey, bowling and putting greens began expanding. A bandstand was opened in 1902.<sup>35</sup>

### Central Government Assistance

Among the other towns that successfully applied for a grant from the Government fund of £10,000 set up in 1841 were Macclesfield, Waterford, Preston and Sunderland.<sup>36</sup> Peel Park, Macclesfield was opened to the public in 1854 and the following year a grant of £500 was made towards laying it out. In 1849 Preston received £300 for the construction of a public walk along the river Ribble. Avenham Walk was a stretch of land which had been conveyed to the Corporation in 1697 and, with the improvements, it became known as Avenham Park. This was followed by further purchases of land by the Corporation until circa 1852.<sup>37</sup> Avenham Park, like Moor Park, was open to the public and used for recreation but was not laid out or fully planted until 1862-5 (see Chapter Nine).

### Speculative Development

Another method of development also already established was to acquire sufficient land to develop both a park and housing. The costs of the park could then be recouped from the housing development. Regent's Park, London and Prince's Park, Liverpool were both examples of this mode of development. The earliest municipal park successfully to exemplify the principle of recoupment of costs from the development of housing was Birkenhead Park. At Birkenhead the cost of building land in 1842 and 1843 was "between £230 and £250 per acre, averaging one shilling per yard". The Park Commissioners approved the plans and elevations for the detached villas and terraces and fixed the rental value. All houses were to be set back twenty yards from the roads and no buildings for trade were to be allowed. In June 1845 a large proportion of the land surrounding



the drives was offered for sale and about "ninety thousand yards were sold, at prices varying from seven to fifteen shillings per yard".<sup>38</sup> Thus the transaction lived up to the expectations of the promoters, that the sale of building land would be on such favourable terms that it would "reimburse the township for the original cost, and the expense of laying out, planting and draining, etc.". <sup>39</sup> Birkenhead was the second park to be designed by Joseph Paxton and his first municipal park. Because of its influence nationally and internationally it has been termed his greatest park.<sup>40</sup> Details of its design will be discussed in Chapter Six.

In Glasgow the Council bought the Kelvingrove and Woodlands estates for £78,000 in 1852 and Joseph Paxton was invited to prepare a design for Kelvingrove Park. This was to be surrounded by houses and like Birkenhead the principle of recoupment would in effect pay for the park. Five years later the Council purchased the site for Queen's Park. This was also laid out by Joseph Paxton and the surroundings of the park leased for building development. The park opened to the public in 1862.<sup>41</sup> However, the financial success of such ventures could not be assumed as two examples, Leeds and Victoria Park, London illustrate.

### Leeds

In Leeds, Woodhouse Moor was acquired by the Corporation in 1857 primarily to prevent it being sold for development (Figure 24). As Leeds expanded during the 1830s and 1840s so its unenclosed common lands, Woodhouse Moor to the north-west of the town, Hunslet Moor and Holbeck Moor, came under increasing pressure. The public had been accustomed to using the moors for recreation, military exercises, election meetings, etc. without hindrance from the owners, the Lords of the Manor. A suggestion was made at a Council meeting in 1845 that the Council should purchase an interest in Woodhouse Moor and so prevent its enclosure in the future, but no action was taken.<sup>42</sup> In 1850 land in the south-east corner of the moor was offered for speculative development and a public meeting was called by the highways surveyors challenging this proposal and setting up a committee to discuss the matter with the Lords of the Manor. Public feeling must have stimulated action by the Council for they created a committee to consider buying the three moors.<sup>43</sup> Provisional agreements were made to purchase Woodhouse Moor for £3,000, Holbeck Moor for £1,000, with an option to purchase Hunslet Moor for £1,100 and



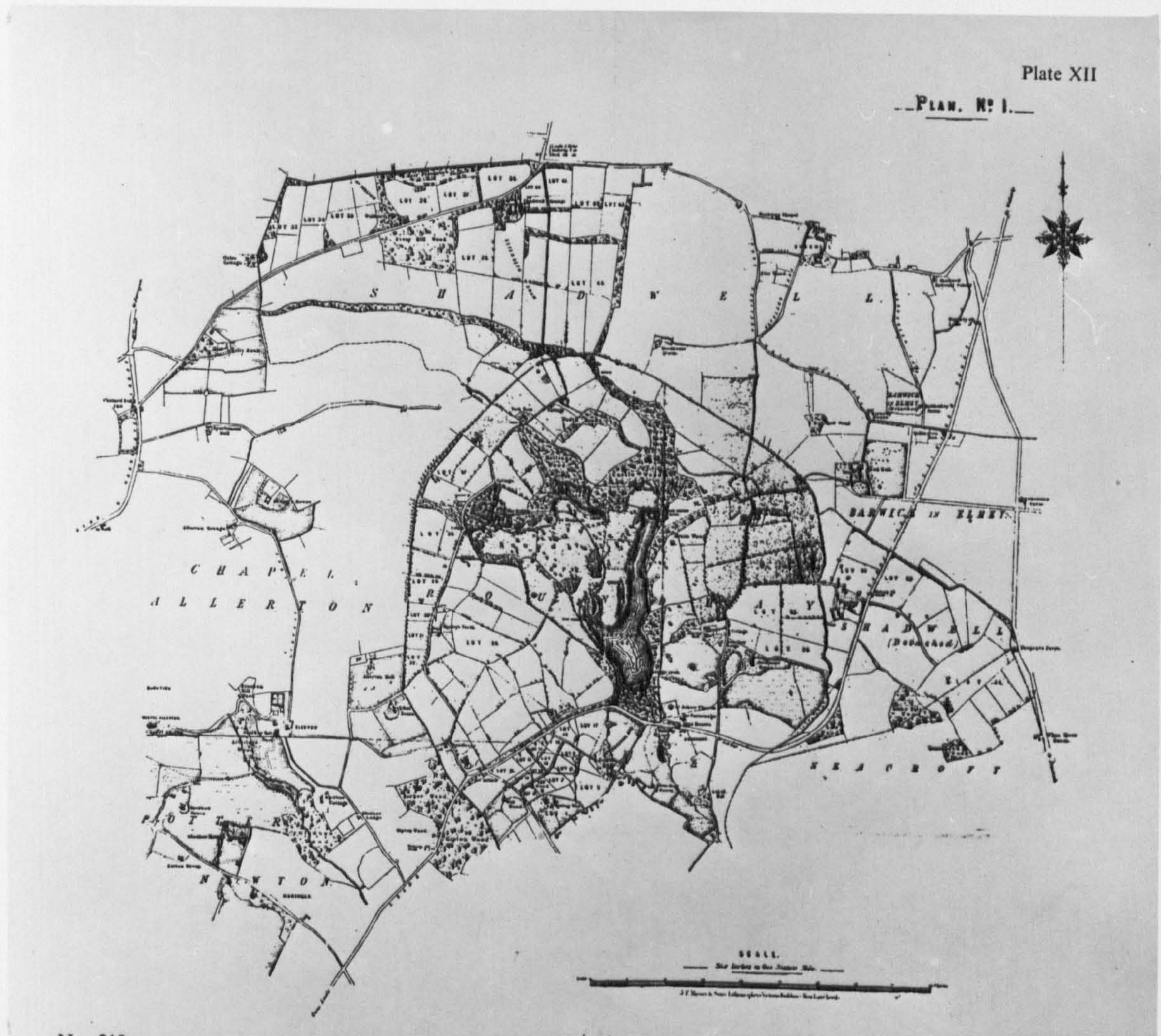


Figure 24 Roundhay Park, Leeds, 1871 showing land for development around it subdivided into lots (Bonsor and Nicholls)



applications for Parliamentary sanction to ratify these purchases were made in an Improvement Act of 1856.<sup>44</sup> Matters did not proceed straightforwardly however, for the Council's proposal to charge the borough for the costs of buying the moors was challenged by the inhabitants of Bramley before a House of Commons Select Committee on Private Bills. As a result the Council purchased only Woodhouse Moor. The other two moors could only be purchased in accordance with the provisions of the 1845 Enclosure Act, that is at the request of one-third and with the approval of two-thirds of those who had an interest in the commons.

Woodhouse Moor was left by the Council in its traditional state and in 1871 The Leeds Mercury complained that it was a standing disgrace "little better than a foul quagmire, decorated by all the diseased cattle of the town".<sup>45</sup> But this does not appear to have deterred people from using it.

It is a wonderful sight to see the chief approach to Woodhouse-moor on a Sunday afternoon and evening in summer. Woodhouse-lane becomes one huge footpath; pavement and horse-road are crowded with eager pedestrians, hastening upwards to the moor to get a breathing of un-heated, un-smoked pure air. In Holbeck also, where dwell many thousands of operatives, there is a general exodus to Holbeck-moor. Every outlet into the country is crowded with persons to whom the luxury of pure air is denied during the week. If you ascend any of the ridges or eminences which surround Leeds, and thence, on a Sunday morning or afternoon, regard the prospect, you will see the whole landscape dotted over with groups of figures; and would find it difficult to cast the eye on a country footpath or green field for miles around, where families and friends are not luxuriating in the blessings of a clear atmosphere. We see something like this exodus to the country in the suburbs of London on a Sunday.<sup>46</sup>

The question of the public expenditure involved was one of the main factors inhibiting the purchase of Holbeck Moor and Hunslet Moor. However, in the 1870s when another opportunity for developing a park presented itself, the question of costs was not seen as a major problem.

In 1871 Leeds Council was investigating the possibility of purchasing the Roundhay Estate with a view to making a park, and recouping the costs by developing housing around it. The Roundhay Park estate consisted of a large house, landscaped gardens, lakes and farmland, and it was offered



for sale by public auction in 1871 by order of Chancery. Before the sale the grounds were opened to the public for one month, and pressure for the Council to buy part of the estate for a municipal park began to build up. This pressure was led by John Barran, Mayor of Leeds, one of the leading manufacturers of the town. Despite the disadvantages of the size of the estate, its distance from the centre of Leeds and lack of transport facilities, public feeling was strongly in favour of the project. A meeting was held in the Corn Exchange on 29 September 1871, with an estimated 10,000 present, which provided evidence of the strength of the public support.<sup>47</sup> The project entailed setting aside some 350 acres out of the 773 acre site so that part of the cost of purchase could be set against the sale of land for villas. But Roundhay was on the north-east side of Leeds, far from the industrial suburbs which were on the south side of the river, public transport to it was far from adequate and, although the Mayor was confident that the land would sell easily, others disagreed. "Roundhay has long been regarded as the most unsuitable suburb of Leeds to reside in".<sup>48</sup> So it appeared unlikely that the building sites would be readily disposed of. The Council did buy Roundhay Park for £139,000 and an Improvement Act of 1872 allowed the Council to raise £150,000 and sell part of the estate for building purposes. It was not until 1890, however, that adequate public transport was provided.<sup>49</sup> Sales of the villa sites were very slow. By 1879 the Council had only obtained £31,588 for about sixty acres of land. Consequently the expense of the park was greater than had been envisaged because of the size of the debt. However, the electors seem to have approved of the project and did not object to a rate of 3d even though they had earlier objected to the 1d rate for public libraries.<sup>50</sup> This example indicates that the location of the development and its accessibility were important factors and that recoupment could prove a long term exercise.

### Victoria Park

The intention in developing Victoria Park in the east end of London was that it should be surrounded by pleasant streets on which attractive houses would be built. James Pennethorne, the first designer of Victoria Park, had been associated with John Nash in the development of Regent's Park and references to it occur frequently during the development of Victoria Park. Both developments were seen as affording the opportunity for a better life for those living nearby. If Regent's Park had improved



living conditions for:

the portion of the community in whose vicinity it is placed ... how much more valuable ... must the formation of Victoria Park prove to that mass of the public residing Eastward? - whose occupations are generally of a character most injurious to health, and whose circumstances preclude the possibility of their participation in the advantages so extensively enjoyed by their more wealthy fellow subjects.<sup>51</sup>

But as well as this concern for physical health, it was thought that Victoria Park would help to create a more balanced community and that working people would benefit in the process:

private capital would thus be expended among those through whose labour it had been accumulated, and would produce those many social and political benefits which it is unnecessary to particularize to your Lordships.<sup>52</sup>

Victoria Park was envisaged as an opportunity for improving land values in the area by adding to its attractions. As a result, migration to the west and the decay in land values would be halted:

To land and house owners in this eastern district it is of the greatest importance that emigration to the west should be checked by providing a rational and wholesome place of recreation similar to those enjoyed in the north and western districts.<sup>53</sup>

The rent of these houses would be high by virtue of the presence of the park and the resulting profits would then recoup the costs of the development of the park. This highlights the problems associated with land values within a capitalist economy. Parks were ostensibly built to improve the environment in which working people lived. That environment included the houses built around the park. But if, due to the presence of the park, land values for the sites adjoining it rose, then working people could not afford to live there. Hence parks would be of limited benefit to working people for they could use them, if they behaved and dressed properly, but they could not live near to them.

For the site of Victoria Park James Pennethorne recommended that it should be located near to the Thames where the population was densest. But a site to the north where the population was not so dense was chosen because the land was cheaper.<sup>54</sup>



Pennethorne's first plan involved the construction of two approach roads to the park, one southwards towards the river, the other on the western side of the park. This western approach would link the park to the City of London and the ease of access would further encourage the desirability of the housing around the park.<sup>55</sup> But funds for the approach roads were not allocated, the building plots did not attract the hoped for investment and were not let and, eventually, they were sold off.<sup>56</sup> There was not one direct road leading to the park:

This park has been miserably managed as to approaches; there is really not a respectable road for a vehicle, even now, - in 1855. The park is very pretty as to plantations, lakes, etc. but the approaches are a disgrace.<sup>57</sup>

Since it was hidden behind blocks of houses on the London side "Where is Victoria Park, is not an infrequent question, even within 100 yards of the gate".<sup>58</sup> The main problem was the limited finances allowed for the development of Victoria Park. The Treasury had hoped for a return similar to that at Regent's Park but the project did not attract sufficient interest and investment in the development of the housing around the park.

### Park Location

The difficulties of attracting developers to build houses around Victoria Park illustrated that an attractive location, that is to say a location attractive to investment, was essential if the project was to succeed, and that although the development of a combined park and housing scheme provided the most straightforward financial justification, success was not necessarily assured or immediate.

An important criticism levied at Victoria Park was that, although it was so large and built at public expense, it did not fulfil the requirements of the poor, because a two-or three-mile walk was involved if a woman wanted to take her children there. Although a great number of people used the park a better solution, it was argued, would have been a number of smaller railed-off areas in the poor districts, of four or five acres, with grass and a few seats, where a woman could leave her children safe in the charge of the gatekeeper, while she went to work, and where cricket could be played, kites flown and games could be played safely.<sup>59</sup>



Location was also a problem at Roundhay Park in Leeds, for the site was some distance from the town and no adequate public transport facilities to the park were provided until nearly twenty years after it opened. While in Manchester the Public Parks Committee recorded in 1851 that frequent complaints had been received from "parties visiting Philips Park of the difficulty and inconvenience ... owing to the badness or circuitousness of the only roads to the park".<sup>60</sup> These complaints had increased latterly because of increases in the tolls on the Ashton New Road, the only carriage road to the park.

The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847<sup>61</sup> indicated that land for parks should be situated at a reasonable distance, not exceeding three miles, from the centre of the principal market or the principal office of the Commissioners of the town. Earlier the SCPW had stressed the need for parks to be accessible to the areas where working people lived. The middle class were well provided for, for they could afford both time and money to take themselves wherever they wished to go, but

with the poor artisan or labouring man it is not so. He cannot afford time or means to set out with his wife or children on a Sunday voyage of discovery, and to find the shades of night, perhaps, falling about him just as he had succeeded in refreshing his eyes with a bit of green.<sup>62</sup>

It is important therefore to see whether the location of municipal parks did meet this need. When local councils were presented with, or leased, the site for a park the options open to them were either to accept, negotiate, or refuse the offer, and examples of all these reactions have been illustrated. No evidence has so far been found of a council explicitly refusing the offer of a gift or lease of a park because it was not adjacent to a densely populated district. When councils did have the opportunity of exercising choice in the site of the park, that is when the park was purchased directly by the municipality, the question of accessibility to densely populated areas could be a matter of serious consideration, as the examples of the Manchester and Salford parks showed. But in instances where the potential for recoupment was present, as at Victoria Park, London, Birkenhead and Glasgow, it was not always clear from the evidence whether the main consideration in choosing the site of the park was its proximity to densely populated areas, the price of the land, or the potential for profit.



Another limitation to councils benefitting financially from park development was illustrated by the examples of the parks at Manchester, Salford and Bradford. Those parks were acquired by local subscription but only the sites of the parks were acquired without any additional land. A similar limitation often arose if the local authority were given a park or if they leased one for, in those instances, the land surrounding the park remained with the owners, and the rise in value of the surrounding property did not accrue to the municipal authority.

In some instances land was acquired initially for different purposes and only subsequently was developed as a park. For example, the thirty acre site of Wavertree Park, Liverpool was purchased by the Corporation in 1843 with the intention of building a new Borough gaol on it. However, the location was judged unsuitable and the land remained unused officially until 1856 when it was laid out as a park.<sup>63</sup> It had been known as Wavertree Park for some time before it was laid out by the Corporation and had apparently been used as a recreation ground unofficially before it was laid out and officially opened as a municipal park.<sup>64</sup> That interesting example indeed illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing land use in fact from the official designation of the use of that land. Liverpool also acquired two sites specifically for parks in 1847/8, but Newsham and Shiel parks were not used as such, nor laid out and opened until 1862 and 1868 respectively.

#### Geographical Distribution

Appendix IV records a chronology of municipal effort regarding parks in the period 1845-1885. This has been compiled from a wide range of sources which include reports in journals such as The Builder and the Gardeners' Chronicle, and records deposited in the archives of local history libraries and Public Records Offices. An attempt was made to find out the date of the first municipal park developed in all towns with populations of over 25,000 in 1851 (Appendix IV). Other towns not included in that list were added as the information became available. No differentiation was made regarding the level of municipal activity, so Torwood Gardens, Torquay was included although, strictly speaking, this was a semi-public town square which was taken over and administered by the local authority in 1853.



An examination of the geographical distribution of the municipal parks developed in the period 1845-59 (Figure 25) shows clearly that they were located predominantly in the north-west of England together with a few parks in the north-east and several in Glasgow, Birmingham and London. This concentration of activity in those towns associated with the major industries of the country reflected the main thrust of the SCPW's investigations. Furthermore, with the exception of Bristol, all those urban centres that had populations of more than 100,000 in 1831 (Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Leeds) developed municipal parks in this period. Of those centres that had populations of more than 100,000 in 1851 (Appendix V), all had acquired parks by 1859 with the exception of Bristol and Belfast.

If the geographical distribution of the towns that acquired parks in the period 1860-80 is examined, it is apparent that there is still a strong emphasis on the industrial towns of the north-west, but activity was also becoming more general. Appendix IV shows that seaside resorts such as Hastings (1864) and Ilfracombe (1872) were acquiring parks, as were smaller towns and suburbs not particularly associated with industry such as Croydon (1865) and Chester (1867).

### Conclusion

The means whereby municipal parks were acquired in the period 1845-1880 were very similar to the processes identified in the first and second phases of park development. Examples of gifts, leasing and speculative development could be found in all periods but municipal enclosure no longer occurred in the period 1845-80. Because of the legal restrictions operating in the period 1860-75, the use of rates to provide and maintain parks was prohibited unless half the estimated cost was secured by other means. Local authorities sought to raise funds by means of subscriptions, by applying to the government for a grant, by floating limited companies, and by recoupment through housing development. The evidence shows that much ingenuity was adopted in order to overcome these difficulties and the various modes of park acquisition each revealed certain problems. Gifts could entail conditions of various kinds, and it was clear that the recipients of gifts of parks were not the only beneficiaries of that process. The role of the benefactor has too often been viewed only from the point of view of the act of the gift itself, but an analysis of some of the conditions attached to certain gifts of







parks showed that the benefits flowed in both directions, to the benefactor as well as to the recipients. Leasing parks showed clearly that the question of unalienable right of access could be established only when the park became a municipal park.

When municipalities purchased sites for parks directly, the problems encountered were often associated with the economic justification and costs. The recoupment of expenditure on the development of parks and housing could not be assumed as the example of Victoria Park showed. In addition, one of the main considerations of local authorities was that all public actions had to be seen to be economically justified. Good cheap government at all levels was the aim and the manner in which public economy was measured and judged to be effective was very narrow. Public expenditure was not only required to be profitable, but the profit had to accrue to the same organisation that had incurred the expenditure and had to be precisely accountable.

The question of park location is a complex one. The need for parks to be accessible to working class districts had been emphasised by the SCPW, and the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 stressed that they should be within three miles of the town centre, i.e. the market. But the final decision of individual local authorities depended on many factors, and location was not necessarily the deciding factor.

In terms of geographical distribution of activity in park development, Appendix IV shows that the main emphasis in the period 1845-59 was on the industrial towns of the north-west. This emphasis was still apparent in the ensuing period 1860-1880 but, in addition, activity was becoming more general and parks were being developed increasingly in resorts and in smaller towns and suburbs. The emphasis of park development in both the periods 1845-59 and 1860-80 was not part of a deliberate plan nor was there specific action directed towards stimulating developments in particular geographical areas. Such government action as there was, the grant of £10,000 and the legislation that was passed, was of general application to towns of any size and was not restricted to the largest urban centres nor to those connected with the major industries of the country.



In the decade following 1845, park development continued steadily, but Appendix IV shows that a sudden increase in activity was evident in 1856 and 1857. Between 1860 and 1875 a slight increase in park development occurs in comparison with the preceding fifteen years, but it is from 1875 onwards that a major increase becomes evident. Some of the reasons for these increases will be examined in Chapters Nine and Ten.



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Appendix to Parks Regulation Act, 1872 (35 & 36 Vict. c.15)
- 9 This brought the creation of a system of self-government for London nearer. The government authorities in London included the City Corporation, about 30 vestries for large parishes, district boards for groups of smaller parishes, boards of guardians and other bodies for special purposes. All these different bodies elected 46 members to a central body, the Metropolitan Board of Works.
- 10 50 & 51 Vict. c.34
- 11 J.J. Sexby was in charge of the L.C.C. Parks Department. The Municipal Parks, Gardens, and Open Spaces of London written by Sexby and published in 1898 lists all the parks, gardens and open spaces available for public recreation in and outside the County of London that were maintained by the L.C.C. at that date.
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- 42 Leeds Mercury, 12 August 1845. Quoted in Barber, op.cit. p.116
- 43 Ibid. 5 October 1850. Quoted in Ibid.
- 44 19 & 20 Vict. c.65
- 45 Leeds Mercury, 30 September 1870. Quoted in Barber, op.cit. p.292
- 46 The Builder, Vol. 18, No. 933, 22 December 1860, p.810
- 47 Barber, op.cit. p.293
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- 49 In order to encourage the use of Roundhay Park, Roundhay Mansion, which was set in the park, was let as a hotel in 1873 and alcohol was allowed to be sold there.
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## CHAPTER SIX

### DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

The design of municipal parks is a complex subject in which there are many variable factors. Appendix IV showed that the parks developed in the period 1845-88 ranged in size from a few acres to hundreds of acres. In addition, their sites varied as did their locations vis à vis the particular towns they were situated in. Some parks were developed on land that was already partially laid out, e.g. Peel Park, Salford and Queen's Park, Manchester. In others, the land was acquired and used for recreation but it was not fully laid out until much later, e.g. Moor Park, Preston. In some instances, the land was laid out as a municipal park at the time the site was acquired, e.g. Philips Park, Manchester.

The parks in which local authorities and park designers had the fullest opportunities to develop their ideas and to introduce those facilities that they thought most appropriate to the design of parks that were to be freely open to all members of the community, were those in which the site was not already partially laid out at the time that it was acquired. Examples of these will be investigated.

In order to understand how the problem of accommodating a range of activities was approached and what the facilities consisted of, it is necessary to try to make comparisons between the designs of various parks. Such comparisons will reveal any differences in lay out, in the facilities for recreation, and in the types of buildings and other structures present.

In the mid-1840s three important parks were developed from land that was not already laid out, Philips Park, Manchester, Birkenhead Park, and Victoria Park, London, whereas Avenham Park, Preston, 1847 and Bellasses Park, Darlington, 1849 were both laid out later (see Appendix IV). A comparison between the design and facilities of Philips Park, Birkenhead Park and Victoria Park will indicate not only the features that they had in common, but also the different approaches taken to the problem of accommodating various activities. The example of the

Manchester/Salford parks has already shown that changes took place in the design of those parks quite soon after they opened, and also the reasons for those changes. It is therefore necessary to survey park design over a period, rather than restricting it to the year of opening, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture. Philips Park is included because the Manchester/Salford parks were the earliest to be developed by a major industrial centre. Victoria Park is included because it was in London and therefore widely reported. Its royal status was the result of the particular way in which the local government of London was developing in this period. Birkenhead Park is included because it was the first municipal park to be designed by Joseph Paxton.

Paxton could almost be said to have had the monopoly of laying out municipal parks. He was involved in designing and laying out parks at Birkenhead, Glasgow, Halifax, Dundee, Dunfermline, and Sydenham Park, London (a speculative development) and his influence extended through the number of people who worked for him and subsequently went on to design municipal parks themselves.<sup>1</sup> Among the latter were Edward Milner, who worked with Paxton on Prince's Park, Liverpool, 1843; Crystal Palace, Sydenham, 1852-4, and the People's Park, Halifax, 1856-7, before going on to set up his own practice and designing a municipal park at Preston and parks at Glossop and Buxton. Edward Kemp was trained at Chatsworth and supervised the construction of Birkenhead Park for Paxton. He set up his own practice in 1847 and went on to design Hesketh Park, Southport, 1868 and Stanley Park, Liverpool, 1870. John Gibson had also been employed by Paxton at Chatsworth and, in 1848, he was appointed superintendent of Victoria Park, London. He was also involved in the development of Battersea Park later. (See Appendix VI for biographical details of major municipal park designers, including the above).

The national importance of Paxton's work as a landscape gardener has been well established in two major works by G.F. Chadwick: The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, 1961 and The Park and the Town, 1966, but neither of these sources analysed the range of recreational facilities in Birkenhead Park or the way in which Paxton accommodated these within his design. In Manchester, the Council were quite specific in their brief to the designers entering the competition as to the facilities that should be catered for in the design. At Birkenhead there was no competition, Paxton



was invited to look at the potential of the site and then to undertake the design of the park. The choice of Paxton was not surprising for, at Prince's Park, Liverpool just across the river, he was undertaking a similar project and his abilities as a landscape gardener for the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth had been well established.<sup>2</sup> Both Prince's Park and Birkenhead Park were exercises in park planning combined with the development of housing.<sup>3</sup>

If Paxton's plans for the two parks are compared, the similarities between them becomes apparent, especially if Birkenhead Park (Figure 26) is considered as effectively two parks divided from north-east to south-west by Ashfield Road. The relationship of the planned housing in Prince's Park (Figure 11) and Birkenhead Park was very similar, for both featured short terraces of housing that appeared to be within the boundaries of the main parks themselves. In each park the lake provided the focal point of interest, with a lake in either part of Birkenhead Park. The lakes had islands in them, so that the whole expanse of water could not be seen at once. The edges of the lakes were well planted so that they were not obvious, and the footpaths around the lakes varied in distance from the edges so that a variety of views was continually presented. This accorded with the principles of design set down by Repton.

The beauty of a lake consists not so much in its size, but in those deep bays and bold promontories which prevent the eye from ranging over its whole surface.<sup>4</sup>

In both parks open areas of grass contrasted with small-scale, more intimate planting and, in both, there were areas of formal planting. The figure-of-eight footpaths, and footpaths in the shape of segments of a circle near the boundaries of both parks reflected the more formal layout of the terraces and crescents of housing facing on to the park, and contrasted with the informal planting and winding footpaths of the inner areas of the parks. There were no formal walks within the parks, terminated by small buildings as at Derby Arboretum.

Birkenhead Park, with 125 acres, was much larger than the forty acres of Prince's Park and a major difference between the two parks was the circulation system, which was very sophisticated in Birkenhead Park. Paxton designed separate traffic circulation systems for pedestrians,



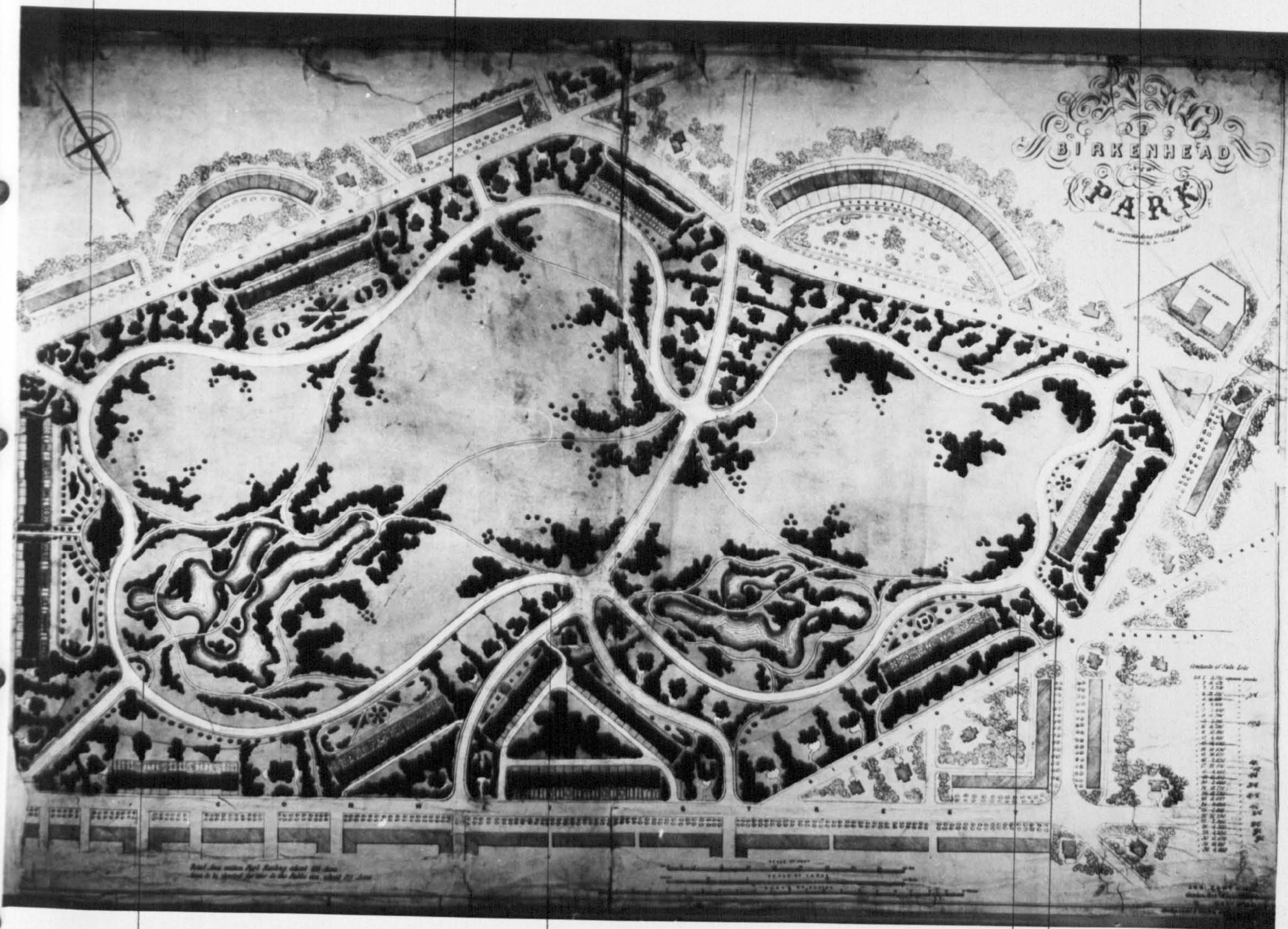


Figure 26 Birkenhead Park plan c.1845 (Liverpool City Libraries)

- 1 Grand Entrance
- 2 Gothic Lodge
- 3 Italian Lodge
- 4 Castellated Lodge
- 5 Norman Lodges
- 6 Central Lodge



providing for through traffic across the park (Ashfield Road) and for pleasure traffic within the park. Outside, the park was bounded by roads for ordinary traffic. It was this circulation system that was to prove decisively influential on F.L. Olmsted in his design for Central Park, New York. Olmsted visited Birkenhead Park twice, in 1850 and 1859, and in the designs he created with Calvert Vaux for Central Park, he developed many of the ideas present at Birkenhead. He wrote vividly of his first visit and presented a clear view of the features of the park that he found most interesting. The main entrance he found too heavy and awkward for the grounds within but, a short distance up the avenue from the main entrance, there was a "thick, diversified, luxuriant garden ... a perfection I never before dreamed of", which consisted of winding paths, a constant varying surface and a variety of shrubs and flowers set in borders of green turf.<sup>5</sup> About a quarter of a mile from the gate, he came to an open field of densely mown grass where cricket was being played and, beyond this, a large meadow with sheep where women and children were playing. The ornamental buildings, which included a pagoda on an island reached by a Chinese bridge, served as shelters from the rain. Olmsted particularly noticed the various pavilions in the parks, including the stone boathouse/bandstand, the macadamised road surfaces, the layout of walks, and the attention paid to drainage.

The park had been laid out by 1845 and at this time Paxton was concerned that "the peculiar characteristics of the place" should be properly developed. He suggested that Edward Kemp, who had been trained at Chatsworth, should be retained as head gardener with free accommodation in one of the lodges, as this was "the almost invariable custom".<sup>6</sup> He also recommended that a lodge in the centre of the park be assigned to the park overlooker, for it was useful to have him living in the middle of the park "and it is the usual practice in good gardens".<sup>7</sup> Thus the standards appropriate to the maintenance of private property should be applied to municipal parks. Paxton's concern with how the park should be maintained also included the annual costs and, in his opinion:

provided the return from the Grassland be appropriated to the use of the Park, as of Course it will be, £1,000 a year will enable the Superintendent to maintain it in the highest possible order.<sup>8</sup>

The grass would provide a source of revenue for the upkeep of the park by letting portions of it for grazing and by selling hay. When Kemp recommended that the hay from the park should be auctioned, this was agreed.<sup>9</sup> In May 1846 the Birkenhead Cricket Club requested the use of a smooth portion of the park. This request was referred to Kemp, who was to consult with Paxton on the matter.<sup>10</sup> So at this date it was evidently not clear to the Committee how Paxton intended the open spaces to be used.

The park was opened officially in 1847 and, in the following spring, the Council agreed that Kemp should let the pasture land at £4 per statute acre.<sup>11</sup> Kemp also recommended that cows as well as sheep should be pastured in the upper part of the park. A decision on this was initially deferred but, in 1848, it was agreed,<sup>12</sup> except that only sheep were allowed in the lower pasture.<sup>13</sup> These uses of the open spaces of the park for producing hay and for pasturing cows and sheep (but not horses) would imply certain restrictions on its use by the public for sports or even picnics. However, by the time the park was opened officially in 1847, both the cricket and the archery grounds would seem to have been firmly established for both are referred to in The Strangers' Guide Through Birkenhead, 1847,<sup>14</sup> though the archery grounds were only officially approved in 1850.<sup>15</sup> By 1857 there were three cricket grounds and a quoiting ground.<sup>16</sup> Football however was not allowed until 1861.<sup>17</sup>

#### Comparison with Philips Park, Manchester

Philips Park was much smaller than Birkenhead hence the circulation system was much simpler and it did not feature the range of buildings of the larger park. The main focal points of the two parts of Birkenhead Park were its lakes but, as Philips Park was bounded on two sides by the river Medlock and a stream flowed through the site, Major did not include a large lake in his design. Instead, the stream was broken by weirs into a succession of ponds (Figure 20). Philips Park was not designed in conjunction with a residential development so the relationship of the park to its surroundings was not planned by Major.

The features that both parks had in common were the variety and diversity



of the design and planting within the park, together with areas of open grassland. There was, however, much more attention paid in Philips Park to the problem of accommodating the various gymnasia, playgrounds and sports grounds within the overall design. In Birkenhead Park, the quoit ground was positioned behind the cricket tent in 1854.<sup>18</sup> It was not specifically allocated a space within Paxton's original design, neither did Paxton make any provision for gymnastic equipment or other playgrounds. The impression from studying the documents relating to the uses of Birkenhead Park for various sports was that the initiative for cricket grounds, archery, quoits, etc. came from the community and were subsequently accommodated by the Parks Committee within Paxton's overall design. Unlike the Manchester park, it would appear that Birkenhead Park was not designed from the outset by Paxton with these activities in view, nor were they incorporated into his overall plan.

#### Victoria Park, London

Although all the royal parks in London were open to the public the real people's park, according to the Illustrated London News, was the one which "in the variety of its features, and in all its arrangements, may be held to be the best, and that is Victoria Park",<sup>19</sup> but it was some time after the park was opened in 1845 that it acquired these features, for its design evolved gradually over a number of years. The initial design was undertaken by James Pennethorne, architect to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. His first design of 1841 had shown very little planting in either the interior of the park or around its boundaries, and there were no lakes.<sup>20</sup> But the map published two years later by the Illustrated London News (Figure 27) showed the areas of planting, the drives across the park and round the outer edges, and the footpaths, though there was still no indication of the sites for any lakes.<sup>21</sup> The sites for some of the housing were also indicated. By late 1845 the levelling and trenching of the plantations was so far advanced that tree planting in the two acre site next to the Regent's canal had been started before the winter set in. About 3,000 mostly deciduous trees, 1,000 evergreens and 1,000 coarse shrubs of large growth were being planted. These latter included lilac, spirea, ribes, Guilder rose and tamarisk.<sup>22</sup>

Pennethorne thought that, as St James's Park, Hyde Park and Regent's



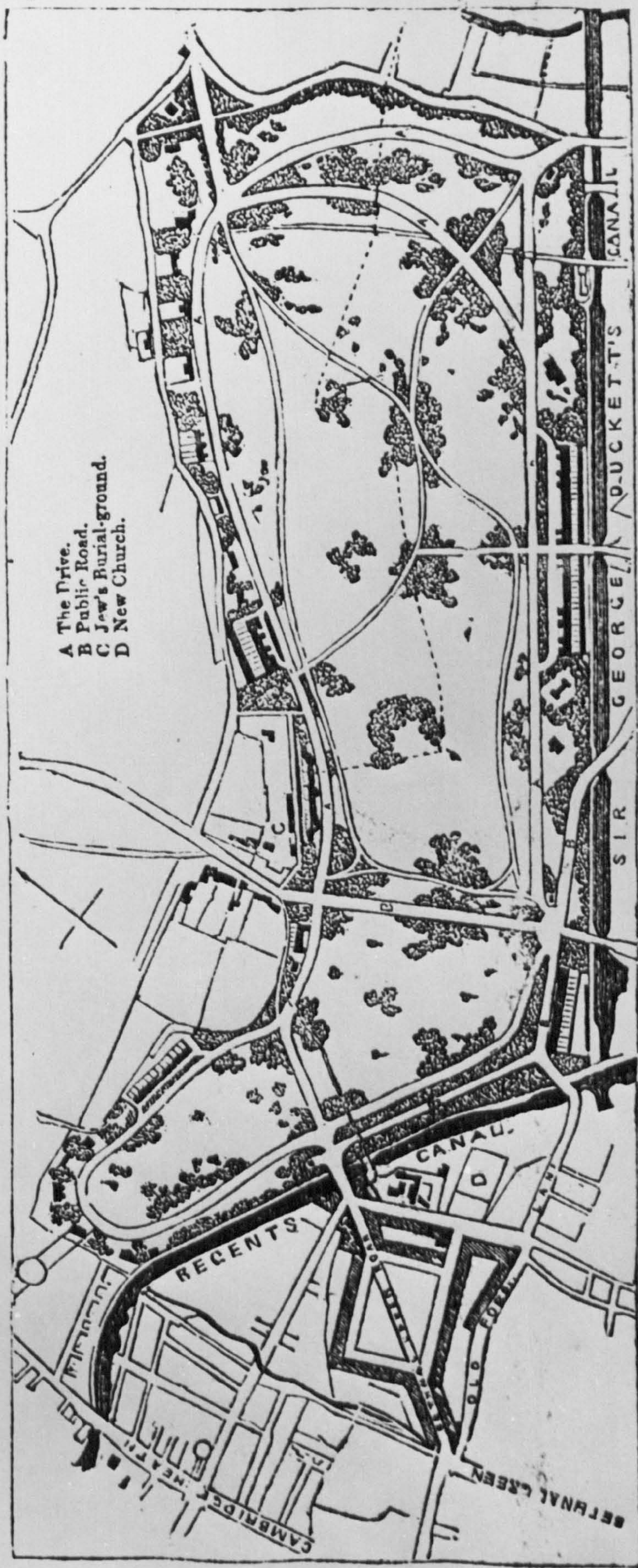


Figure 27 Victoria Park, 1843 (Illustrated London News, 17 June 1843, p.426)



Park all had ornamental waters, it seemed that they were "almost an integral and indispensable part of a Royal Park". A lake would improve the scenery and attractions of the park though, at the seven acres planned, it would be smaller than the lakes in the other royal parks. Islands in the lake would have the earth excavated from the lake deposited on them so minimising costs of removal. The effect of the islands would be to divide the water into three channels, providing for intricacy and "there will not be any termination of the water visible from any one point". The lake would be situated in low ground surrounded by planting and building so that it would not, from any point, be visible at the same time as the canals outside the boundaries of the park. Excavating the lake would also supply gravel for park construction. By 1846 two lakes were being excavated, one in the western part of the park and the other in the centre of the eastern part.<sup>23</sup>

Pennethorne also suggested buying a pagoda, built by Peto and Grissell, which stood at Hyde Park corner and was for sale for £800. This could be removed and refixed for £25 and, if it were placed on the larger island, it would be "extremely ornamental and useful". Either it could serve as a boathouse or the Eastern Literary and Scientific Institution could become tenants of both the pagoda and the island. It would need repainting and the foundations would cost £150-£170.<sup>24</sup> The use envisaged was therefore quite different from that of the Birkenhead pagoda, which was used as a shelter.

By 1846 the park was progressing well "so as already to afford to the eastern inhabitants of the Metropolis an amusement to which they have, until lately, been strangers".<sup>25</sup> The park had been visited by 25,000 persons on Good Friday and by an even greater number on Easter Monday.

The plantations are thriving: upwards of 20,000 trees and shrubs are new in the ground, and the plan of a scientific arboretum is followed in their disposal, so as to combine amusement and information of a high class. The leading footpaths are in course of completion.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most important differences between the plan of 1846 and the earlier ones was that the interior of the park was preserved from traffic, as the new public roads went round the park, as can be seen

in the plan of 1863 (Figure 28). All carriages were prohibited within the park at night.<sup>27</sup>

In 1849 John Gibson, who had worked with Paxton at Chatsworth, was appointed superintendent of Victoria Park. Gibson thought that there was a great need to increase the shelter in the park, particularly by increasing the size of the plantations. Other improvements instituted by Gibson included extending the western lake on its southern side, so widening it from what had previously been a rather canal-like appearance, raising mounds along the northern side of the western lake and generally increasing the diversity in the park.<sup>28</sup> The effect of these improvements can be seen in Figure 28. By 1863, in addition to the two bathing lakes (1) in the eastern part of the park, there were also two gymnasia (2), the one in the eastern part of the park largely screened by trees and, in general, the planting was much richer. Another feature to be seen on this plan is the drinking fountain (3) donated by Baroness Burdett-Coutts and opened in 1862 (Figure 29). This was designed by Henry Darbishire in a Moorish/Gothic style with dolphins and putti in the niches. The print shows clearly the rather formal planting surrounding the fountain, reflecting its plan. The photograph (Figure 30) shows the fountain in 1952. In addition a new arcade, designed by Pennethorne as a shelter from the rain, had also been erected in the western part of the park,<sup>29</sup> (Figure 31 (not shown on the 1863 plan)). This was in a Moorish/Romanesque style and was brightly coloured, perhaps to cheer people up as they sheltered there from the rain.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike Birkenhead Park, whose design had been completed by 1845, the design of Victoria Park evolved gradually over a long period. The main recreational activities at Victoria Park were bathing, cricket and gymnastics, but the first lake was not designed from the outset for this purpose. It is when the activities allowed in the park are analysed in more detail that it becomes possible to understand why some were permitted and others were not (see Chapter Eight).

### Architecture and Buildings

In general, municipal park buildings can be divided into three main categories: those needed for the maintenance of the park; those intended for the users of the park; and commemorative buildings and statues.



## VICTORIA PARK.

1863.

Presented by order of the First Commissioner of Her Majesty's Customs & Excise

by T. A. DASH, Land Supervisor  
Office of Works, August, 1946.3

## CONTENTS

Under the management of the Office of Work-

	$N^0, 1$	$N^1, 2$	$N^2, 3$	$N^3, 4$
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St Matthew Bethel Grove	30	5	19	53
St Marys Abroad to Row	30	5	19	53
	30	5	19	53

Add for Row between  $N^0, 1$  & 2 on the Parach of St Matthew Bethel Grove

total 100 100 100 100

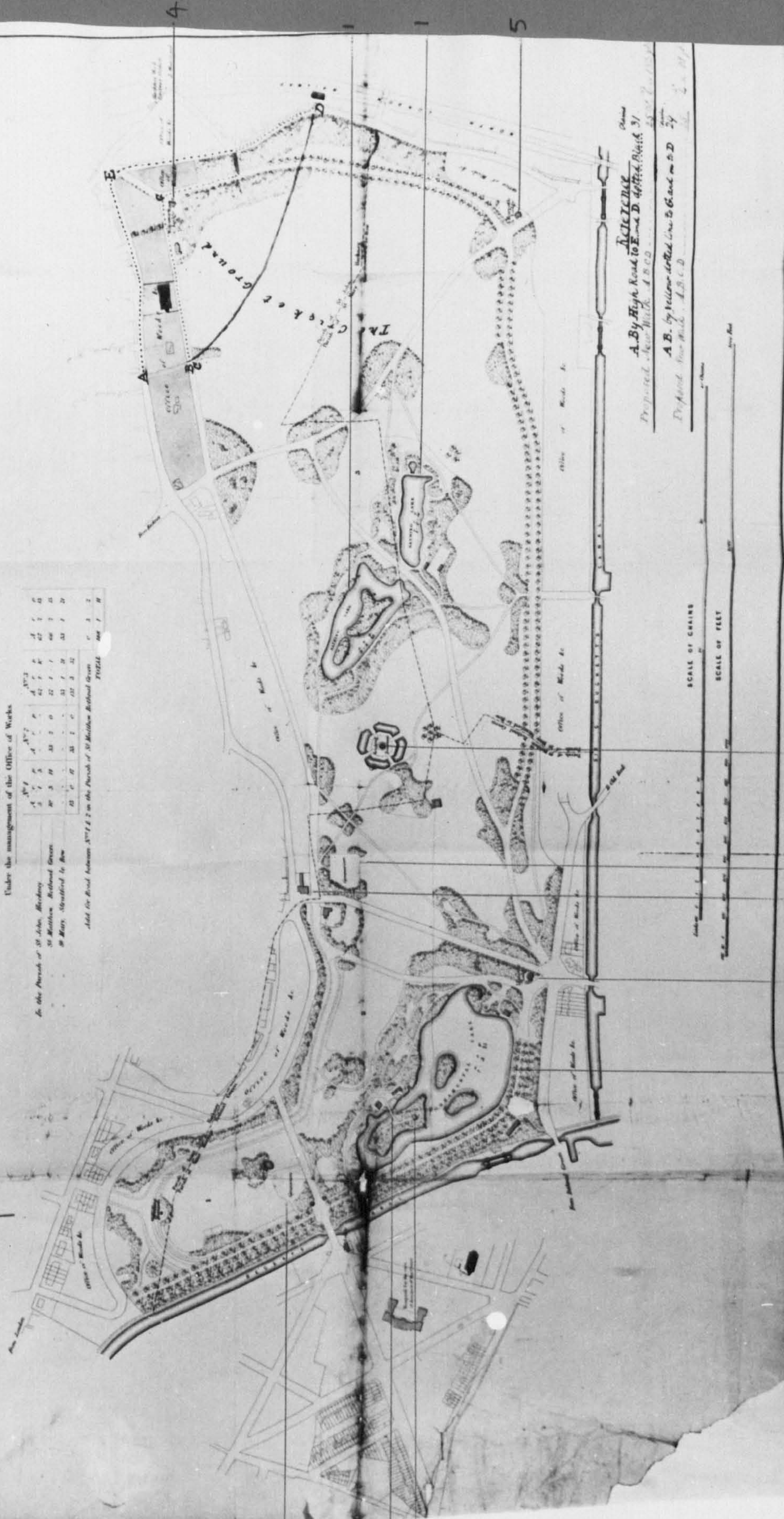


Figure 28 Victoria Park, 1863 (GLC Record Office)

- |   |                   |   |                  |    |                     |
|---|-------------------|---|------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Bathing Lakes     | 4 | Molesworth Lodge | 7  | Main Entrance Lodge |
| 2 | Gymnasia          | 5 | Morpeth Lodge    | 8  | Pagoda              |
| 3 | Drinking Fountain | 6 | Llanover Lodge   | 9  | Chinese Bridge      |
|   |                   |   |                  | 10 | Ornamental Water    |



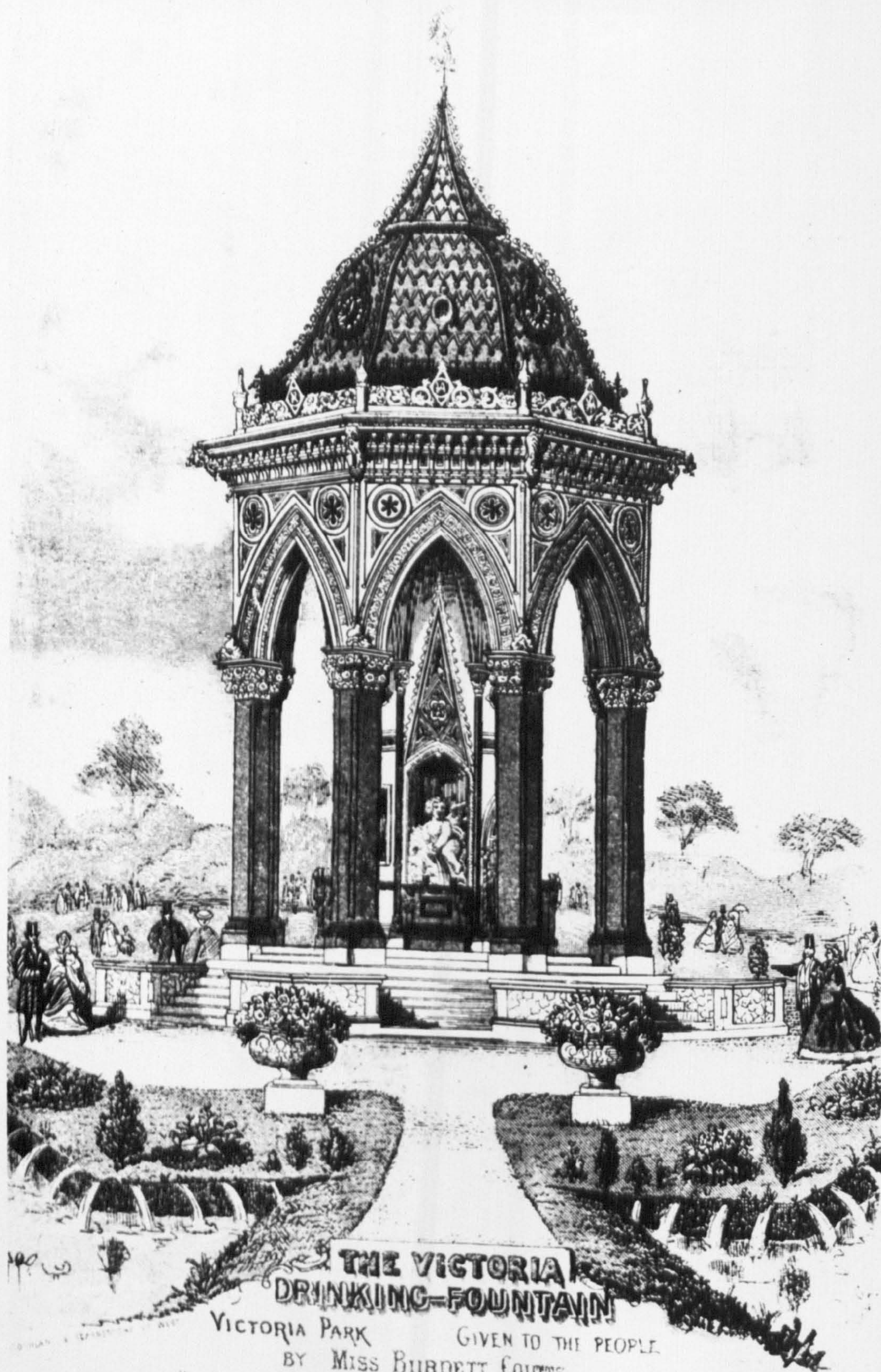


Figure 29 H. Darbishire, fountain (GLC Record Office)



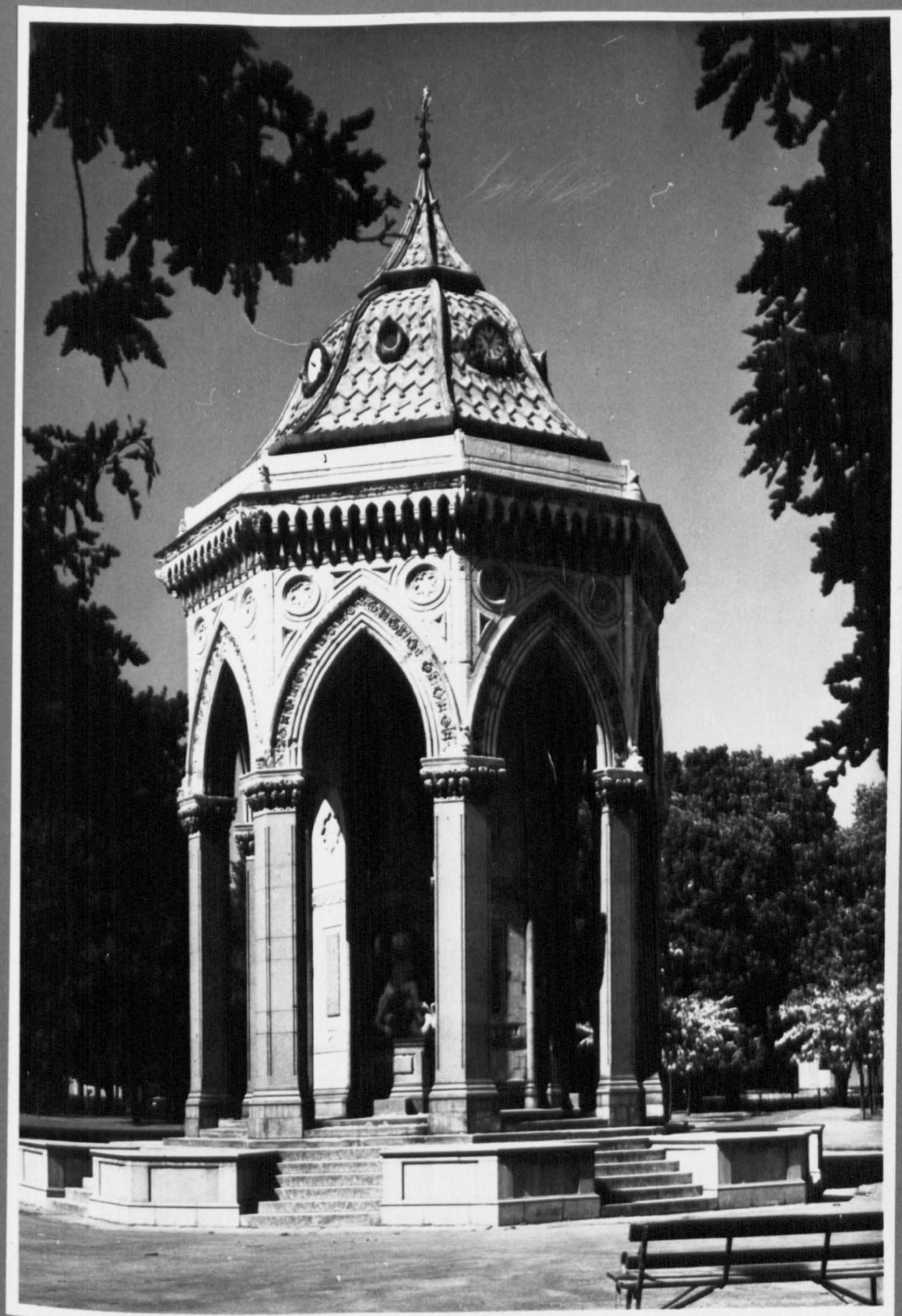


Figure 30 Burdett-Coutts fountain, photograph 1952  
(GLC Record Office)



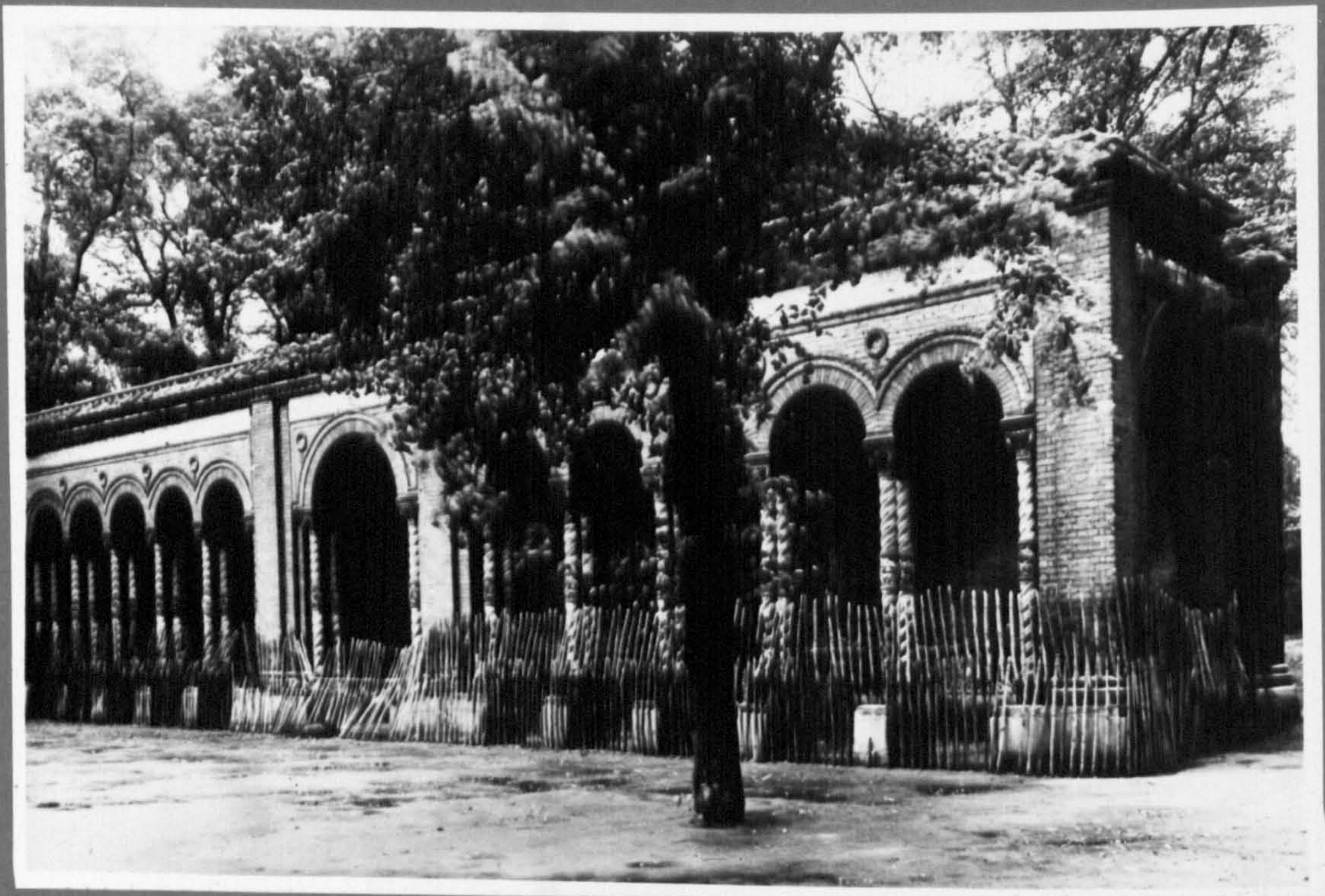


Figure 31 J. Pennethorne, Moorish Arcade (GLC Record Office)



In the view of the Scottish theorist and practitioner of landscape gardening C.H.J. Smith, only a few buildings were necessary for public parks: a superintendent's house, cottages for the gatekeepers and a greenhouse for propagation and protection of plants if the park was to feature a flower garden.<sup>31</sup> The central feature of a private park was the house but in many public parks this feature was absent. However, in both Peel Park, Salford and Queen's Park, Manchester major buildings had existed before the decision was taken to develop the municipal parks. At Queen's Park therefore the role of Hendham Hall in forming the main focus of the development of the park did not change (see Figure 19). At Peel Park the main building was situated near the main entrance and formed a focal point from this approach to the park (Figure 18). However, at Philips Park, Birkenhead Park and Victoria Park, there were no such large-scale buildings in existence. In Birkenhead the main foci inside the park were the two lakes, as has already been established, but from the point of view of buildings, the most important in terms of scale and impact was undoubtedly the main entrance (Figure 32) designed by Lewis Hornblower and John Robertson.<sup>32</sup> This consisted of two lodges linked by a triple arcaded screen, with giant unfluted Ionic columns. The central archway was for carriages, the two flanking ones for pedestrians, and the whole formed a triumphal arch. Triumphal arches are commemorative structures but, in this instance, the event which was being celebrated was neither a royal visit nor a military victory, nor the munificence of a local dignitary, but the efforts of the Birkenhead Road and Improvement Committee in achieving the development of the park. There was no large-scale approach outside the park and the entrance thus formed an isolated feature. Its classical features were, however, reflected in the boathouse/bandstand in the park (Figure 33).

None of the other early parks featured such an imposing entrance when they opened. Cast-iron gates with the park-keeper's lodge adjacent seems to have been the solution adopted initially by other parks, and the main lodge and entrance gates at Victoria Park can be seen clearly in Figure 34. In some instances monumental entrance arches were added later. For example, the Victoria Arch at the main entrance of Peel Park (Figure 35) was designed by Thomas Groom Barker to commemorate the second visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1857,<sup>33</sup> and was opened in 1859.<sup>34</sup> Like the main entrance at Birkenhead Park, this featured a central arch flanked by two smaller ones, but unlike Birkenhead, it was



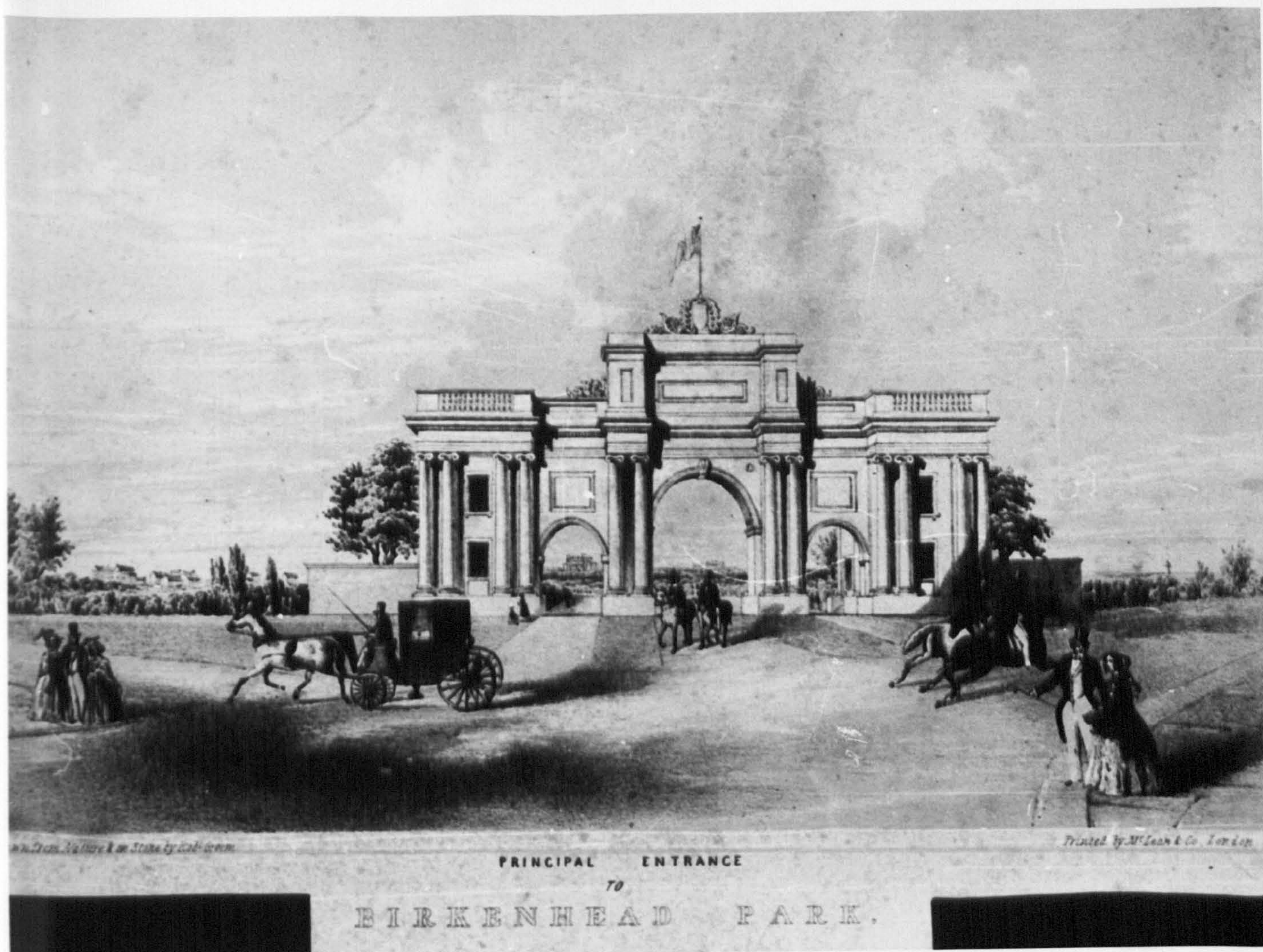
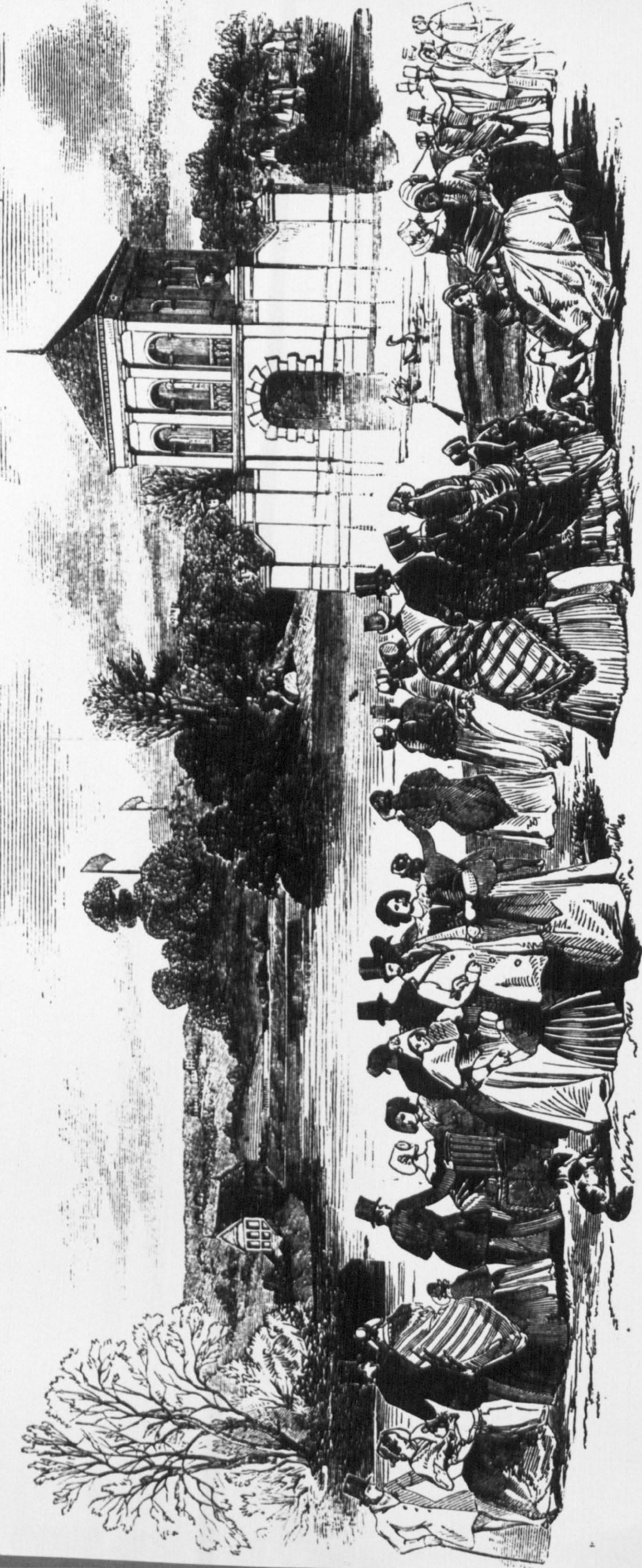


Figure 32 L. Hornblower and J. Robertson  
Main Entrance, Birkenhead Park  
(Liverpool City Libraries)





OPENING OF THE PARK.





VICTORIA PARK.—THE LODGE.

2.5.46 1.6.4

Figure 34 J. Pennethorne, Main Lodge and Entrance Gates, Victoria Park, 1846 (GLC Record Office)

Figure 35 T. Groom Barker, Victoria Arch, Peel Park, 1859 (Manchester Central Library)



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PEEL PARK, SALFORD,

Half-tone Illustrations by City Wood Engraving Co. Ltd., Manchester.



based largely on Moorish and Indian features, with its flanking horseshoe arches and onion domes, rather than classical ones. Also unlike Birkenhead the lodge was not incorporated into the arch and can be clearly seen behind it. By contrast, when Queen Victoria visited Victoria Park in 1873, a temporary entrance was constructed in the form of "A triple arch of triumph ... so deep as to resemble a long marquee in three compartments, open at either end".<sup>35</sup> This temporary structure was in scarlet and gold and was decked with flags, shields and other decorations.

The occasion of Queen Victoria's first visit to Peel Park in 1851 had been commemorated by a marble statue by the sculptor Matthew Noble. The other commemorative statues in the park at this date were of Sir Robert Peel and of Joseph Brotherton, MP, and were also the work of Matthew Noble.<sup>36</sup> Commemorative statuary was a way of enhancing the honour of local dignitaries, officials and the crown and of reinforcing their status. Physically elevated on plinths, these statues appeared to look down upon the visitors to the park. The park users in turn "looked up" both literally and metaphorically to these personages.

As well as buildings and statues, objects of geological and of military interest formed features in certain parks. For example, in Peel Park in 1860 there were in addition to the statues the following objects of interest: a granite glacial boulder weighing six tons; a block of Vesuvian lava; basalt from the Giant's Causeway; and two 68-pound Russian guns from Sebastapol.<sup>37</sup> War trophies served to reinforce patriotic feelings, while geological specimens were another way of introducing an educational element into the park.

Apart from commemorative buildings, the two other main categories of park buildings were those needed for the maintenance of the park, such as lodges for park-keepers and places to store and bring on plants, and those for park users. These latter offered facilities such as refreshments, public conveniences, drinking fountains, and also extended the use of the park in poor weather by providing shelter. Other park buildings related to "appropriate" recreational uses of the park, such as tents and pavilions for cricket, boathouses and bandstands.



## Lodges

All these parks had lodges which provided accommodation for the park superintendent and keepers. The integration of the lodges with the main entrance gate, to form a triumphal arch, as at Birkenhead, was not however a solution that was widely adopted. Generally, lodges were small-scale one- or two-storey buildings which were intended not to form a dominant feature of the landscape but merely to provide variety and diversity within the landscape. The lodge seen just inside the gate at Peel Park (Figure 35) illustrates this point, for it is partially obscured by the plants growing around it, and its generally horizontal emphasis is only just relieved by the chimney. This was only one-storey high whereas the lodges at Queen's Park were of two-storeys. These were built of brick with stone dressings which added to their variety.<sup>38</sup>

(Figure 16).

At Birkenhead, variety was achieved by means of the varying styles of architecture used for the lodges designed, like the main entrance and the boathouse/bandstand, by Lewis Hornblower and John Robertson. (Their location is shown in Figure 26). Despite its name, the Gothic Lodge was in Tudor style with stone quoins and mullions and ornamental chimney stacks (Figure 36). The Italian Lodge, with its arcaded belvedere tower, was more aptly named, as was the Castellated Lodge. The Norman Lodges were a pair of axially symmetrical Greek Revival buildings flanking the Park Road North entrance, each with a Doric porch in antis (Figure 37). The Central Lodge also featured many classical references in its pilastered upper storey, rusticated ground floor, and balustrated roofline (Figure 38).

Often the lodge situated at the main entrance was the home of the superintendent who was responsible for opening and closing the main gates, morning and evening, and for seeing that order was kept in the park. The importance of the role of guardian of the park could be emphasised by the scale of the lodge and this would, in turn, reinforce the importance of the park as a world apart, separated from its surroundings by railings. This was clearly recognised by Pennethorne at Victoria Park. The lodge at the principal approach to the park from London ought "to contain more conveniences and to be more important in appearance than the other lodges". Its estimated cost was to be between £1,000 and £5,000, a notably large sum.<sup>39</sup>





Figure 36 L. Hornblower and J. Robertson, Gothic Lodge,  
Birkenhead Park, (Cheshire Life, February 1978, p.37)

Figure 37 L. Hornblower and J. Robertson, Norman Lodges,  
Birkenhead Park (Ibid. p.40)







Figure 38 L. Hornblower and J. Robertson, Central Lodge,  
Birkenhead Park (Cheshire Life, February 1978, p.40)



A contemporary source noted the size and cost of the final building which was "Elizabethan in character, featured a tower and was built of red brick with stone dressings".<sup>40</sup>

In 1847 the superintendent suggested that there should be two or three lodges built at the more distant entrances to the park. "Four rooms on the Ground floor would be sufficient, kept low and pretily (sic) ornamented".<sup>41</sup> But it was not until some years later, in 1857, that tenders were received from Prichard & Co. to erect one gate-keeper's lodge for £425, and two other lodges in the park to the same plans and specifications, for £800. One of these was to have a bay window for the extra cost of £18.<sup>42</sup> A comparison between the scale and detailing of these three lodges with that at the main entrance makes clear the different roles that the buildings played (Figures 39-41. Their location is identified in Figure 28).

Lodges were a favourite topic for design in picturesque pattern books (Appendix I) and the relationship between theory and practice in this area was frequently a direct one. For example, James Robertson had contributed designs for lodges to J.C. Loudon's Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture, 1839 and to other Loudon publications. A pattern book published by T.J. Ricauti in 1848 suggested designs for lodges which would combine the functions of accommodation for the keeper with those of store-rooms for tools and seeds.<sup>43</sup> (Figures 32, 43). The tall chimneys, varied rooflines and varied textures of material emphasised picturesque principles within a Tudor vernacular vocabulary, and all for the price of £110.

### Chinese Buildings

The Chinese influence in garden buildings was introduced into Birkenhead Park from the beginning. It represents an interesting conservatism in approved taste. This influence can be traced back to the mid-eighteenth century and it was reinforced by the writings and practice of William Chambers, whose pagoda at Kew Gardens dated from 1763.<sup>44</sup> The introduction of Chinese buildings into the municipal park related directly to picturesque principles and they were seen as a way of introducing diversity and variety into the landscape, while at the same time providing structures that could be used as shelters from the rain or for other





Figure 39 Molesworth Lodge, Victoria Park (GLC Record Office)

Figure 40 Morpeth Lodge, Victoria Park (Ibid)





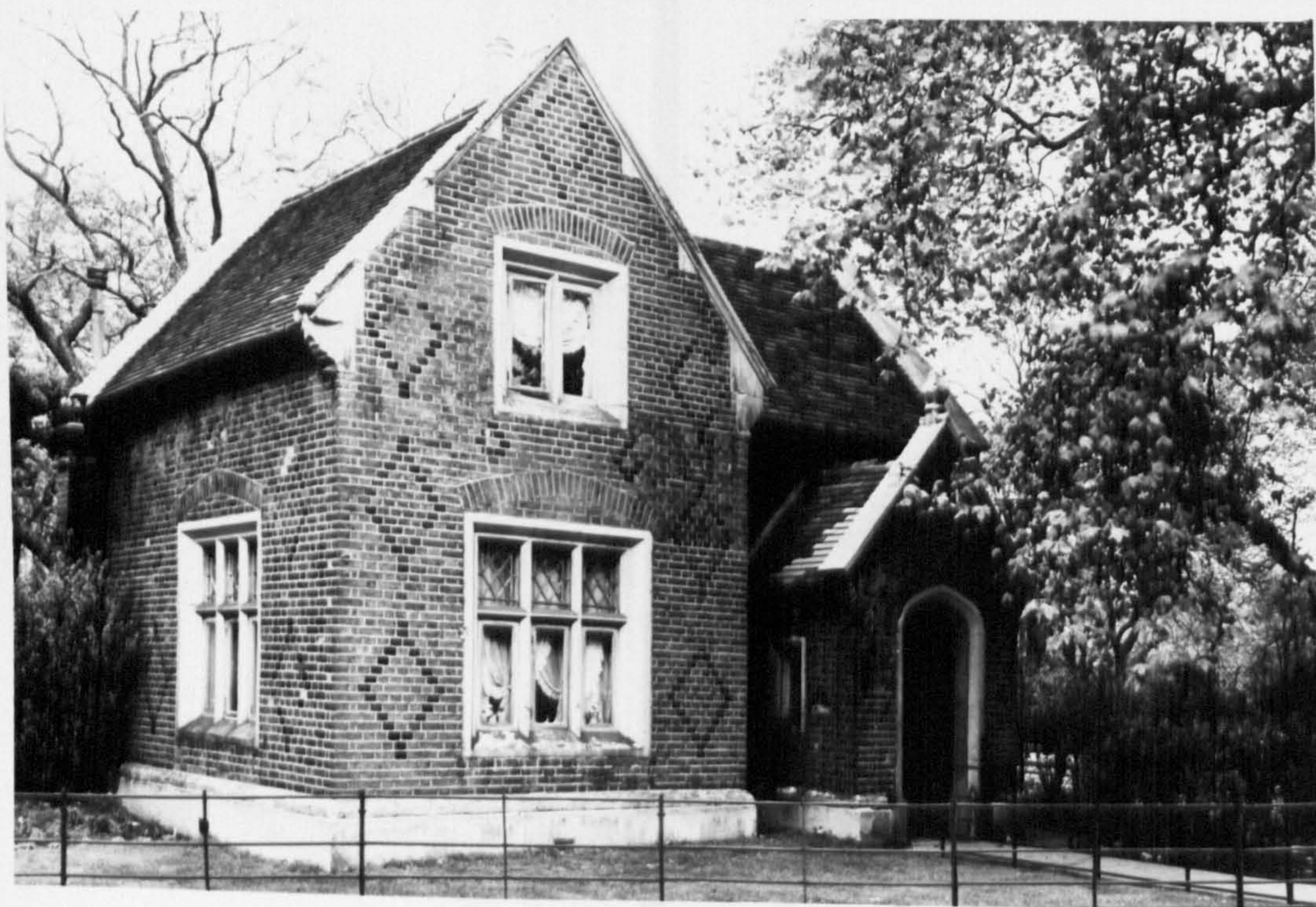
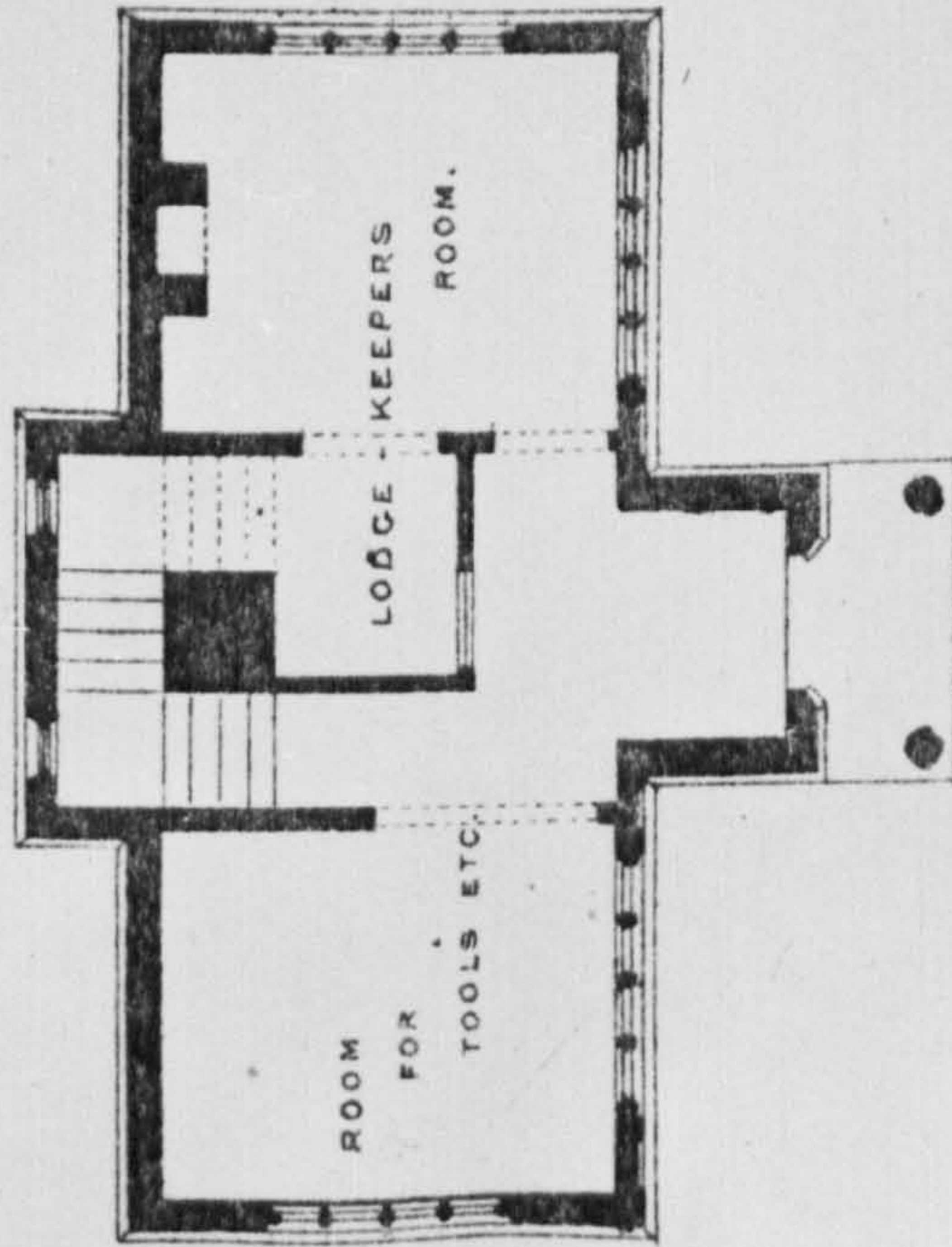
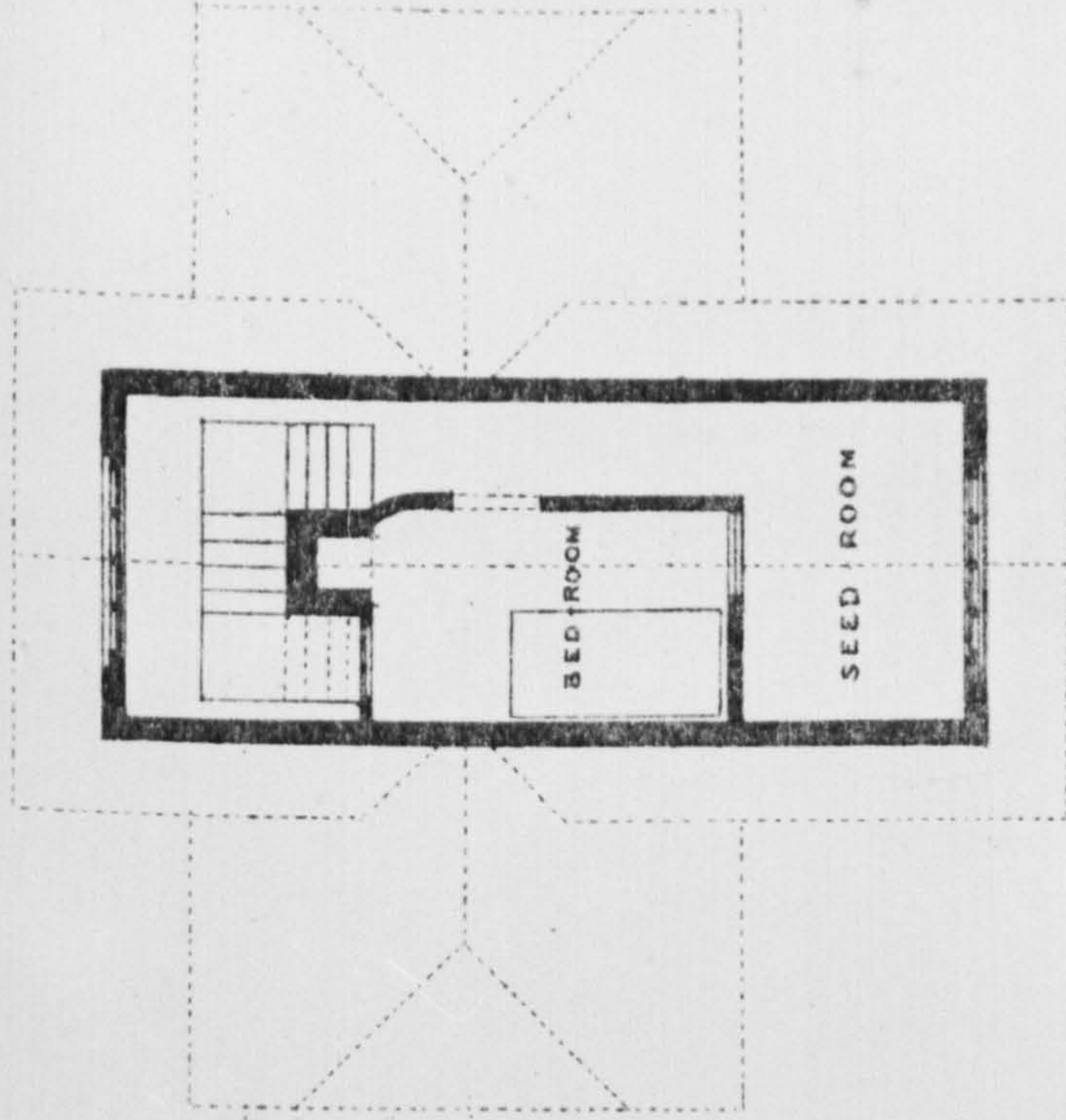


Figure 41 Llanover Lodge, Grove Road, Victoria Park (GLC Record Office)





PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR.

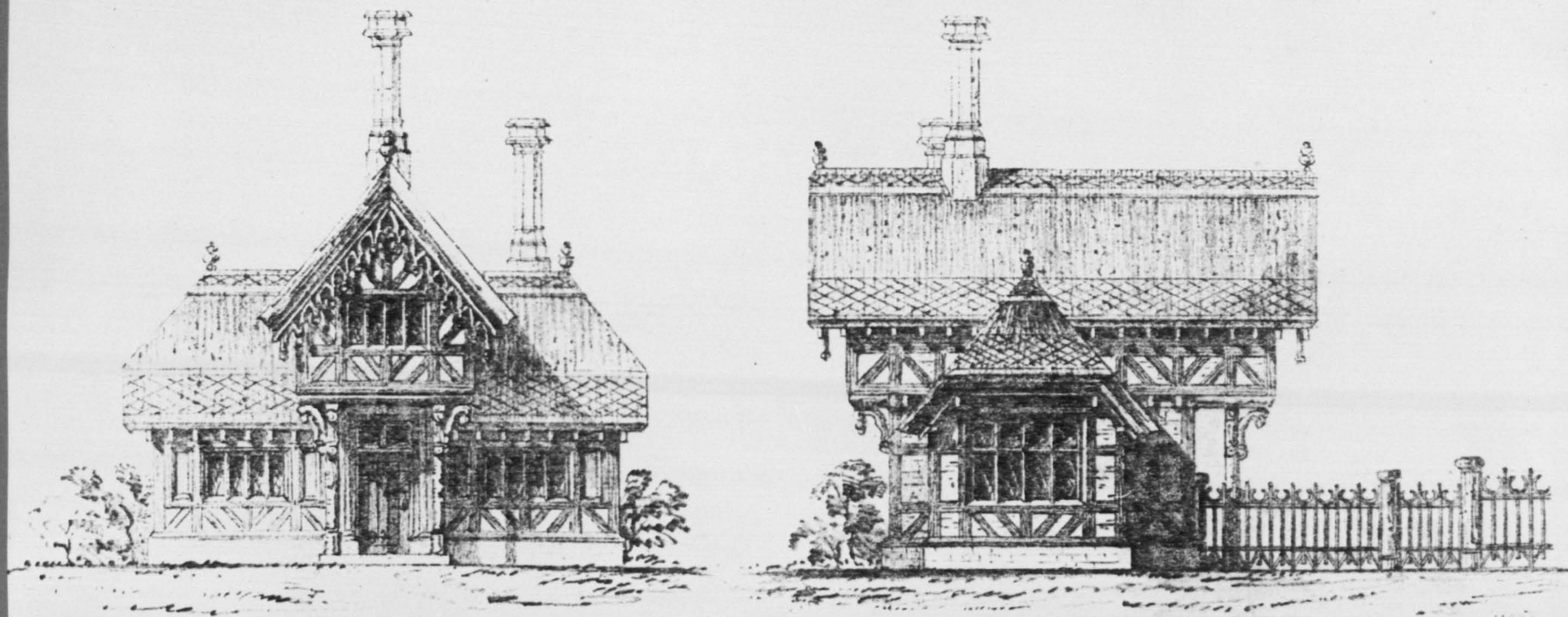


PLAN OF UPPER FLOOR.



Figure 42 T.J. Ricauti, gate-lodge, plan 1848 (Ricauti, op.cit. plate No. 4)





ENTRANCE ELEVATION.

SIDE ELEVATION.

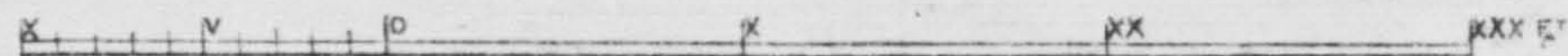


Figure 43 T.J. Ricauti, gate-lodge, elevations (Ricauti, op.cit. plate No. 5)



practical purposes. The pagoda at Birkenhead Park was used as a shelter and was reached by means of a Chinese bridge (Figure 44).<sup>45</sup>

Victoria Park also featured a pagoda which was situated on an island in the ornamental lake (the western lake). This was installed circa 1848 for, in February 1849, designs in watercolour for a Chinese footbridge leading to a Chinese island, were presented.<sup>46</sup> This pagoda can be clearly seen in views of the park published by the Illustrated London News in 1873 (Figure 45, top left. See Figure 28 for location in park). The structure was far smaller than the pagoda erected in Kew Gardens but the variety that its presence added to that part of the park can be clearly seen from this illustration and in Figures 46, 47. The Chinese bridge at Victoria Park can be seen in the centre of Figure 45. The springing arch and lightness of this bridge and the designs of the bridges at Birkenhead Park (Figure 48) would not, however, have met with Joshua Major's approval.

Of whatever a bridge may be composed, whether of wood, iron, or stone, or whatever extent it may be, it should be perfectly horizontal or level across. It is inharmonious when it falls each way from the centre.<sup>47</sup>

However, many disagreed with these principles. Both the Swiss bridge (Figure 49) and the rustic bridge (Figure 50) at Birkenhead Park, and the sketches for other bridges there, showed the preference for the picturesque variety which could be achieved with arched or stepped bridges. Furthermore, such bridges could from certain viewpoints provide a frame to the more distant vistas and this is hinted at in Figure 50.

### Other Buildings

The diversity of buildings and furniture present in Victoria Park in 1873 are illustrated clearly in Figure 45. Behind the rustic seat (top right) the bandstand can be seen.<sup>48</sup> Although Birkenhead Park featured a boathouse/bandstand (Figure 33) there is no evidence that music was ever played there. Also although it was called a boathouse, only one boat was kept there for use in maintaining the lake; it was not a boathouse for boats which the public could use. In Victoria Park boating was allowed on the ornamental lake, and the boathouse can be clearly seen in the centre of Figure 45. It was a wooden structure, as was the refreshment saloon (lower left).



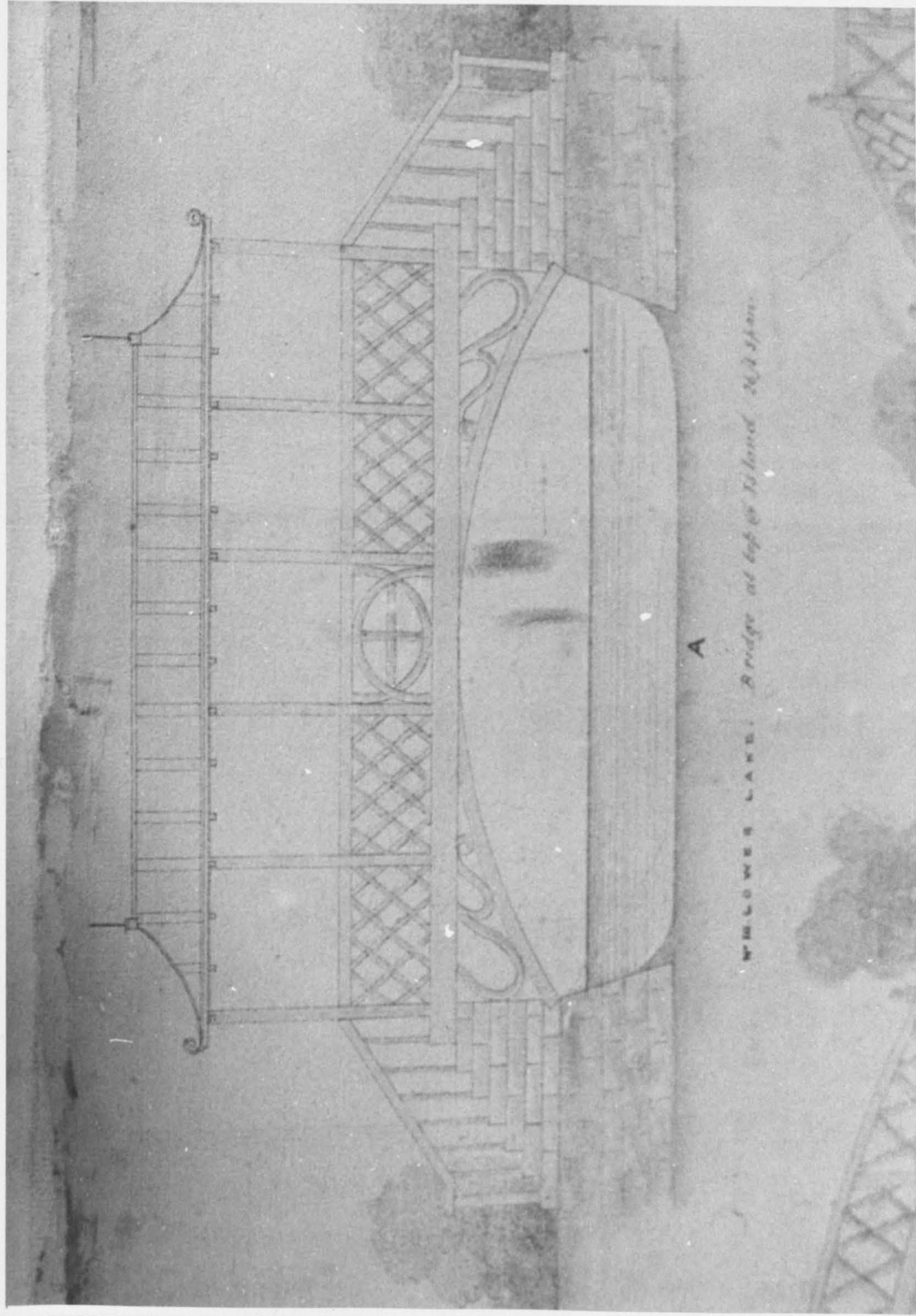


Figure 44 Chinese Bridge, Birkenhead Park (Birkenhead Library)



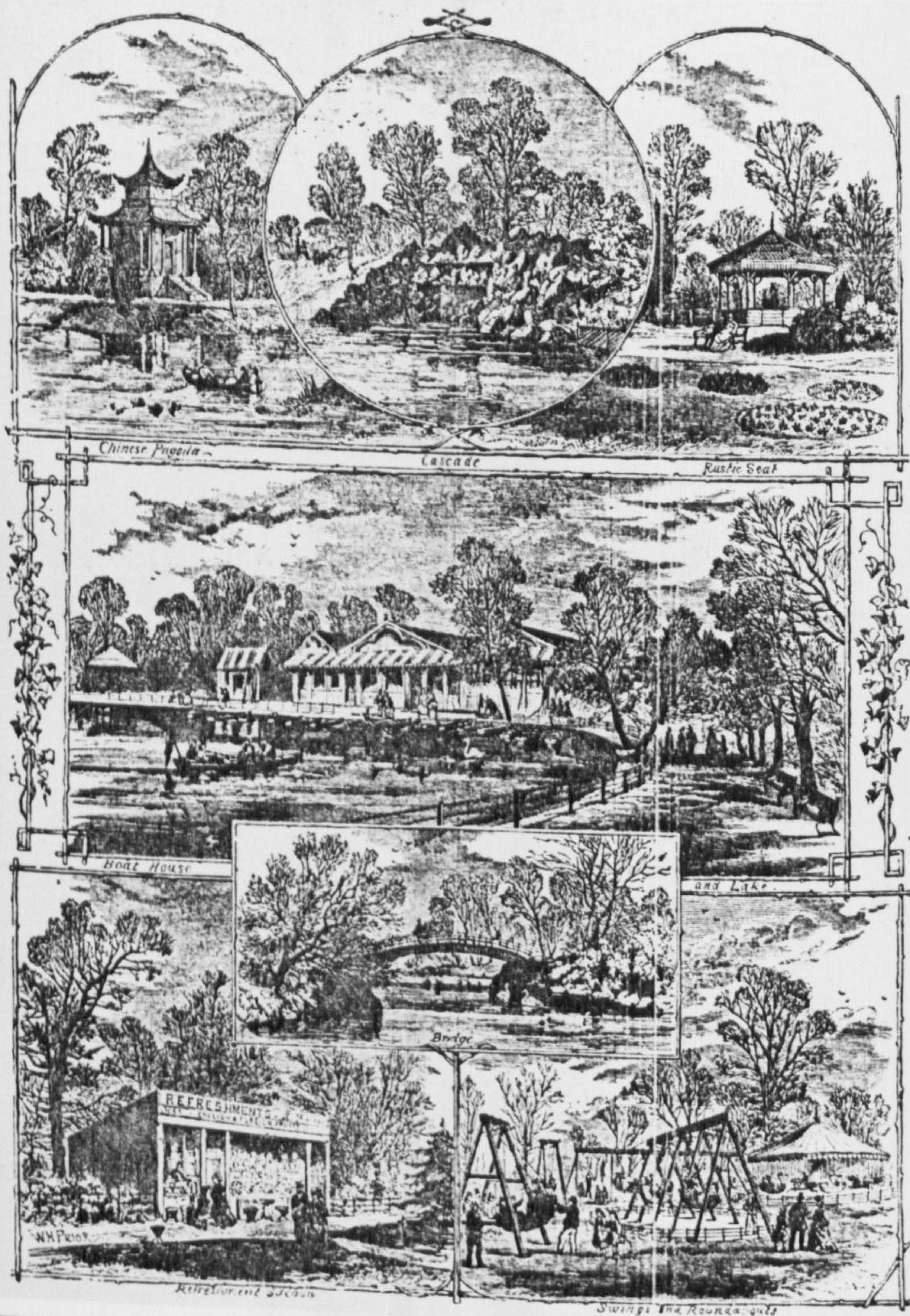


Figure 45 Views of Victoria Park in 1873  
 (Illustrated London News, 12 April 1873, p.349)





Figure 46 Pagoda, Victoria Park (GLC Record Office)





Figure 47 Pagoda, Victoria Park, detail (GLC Record Office)



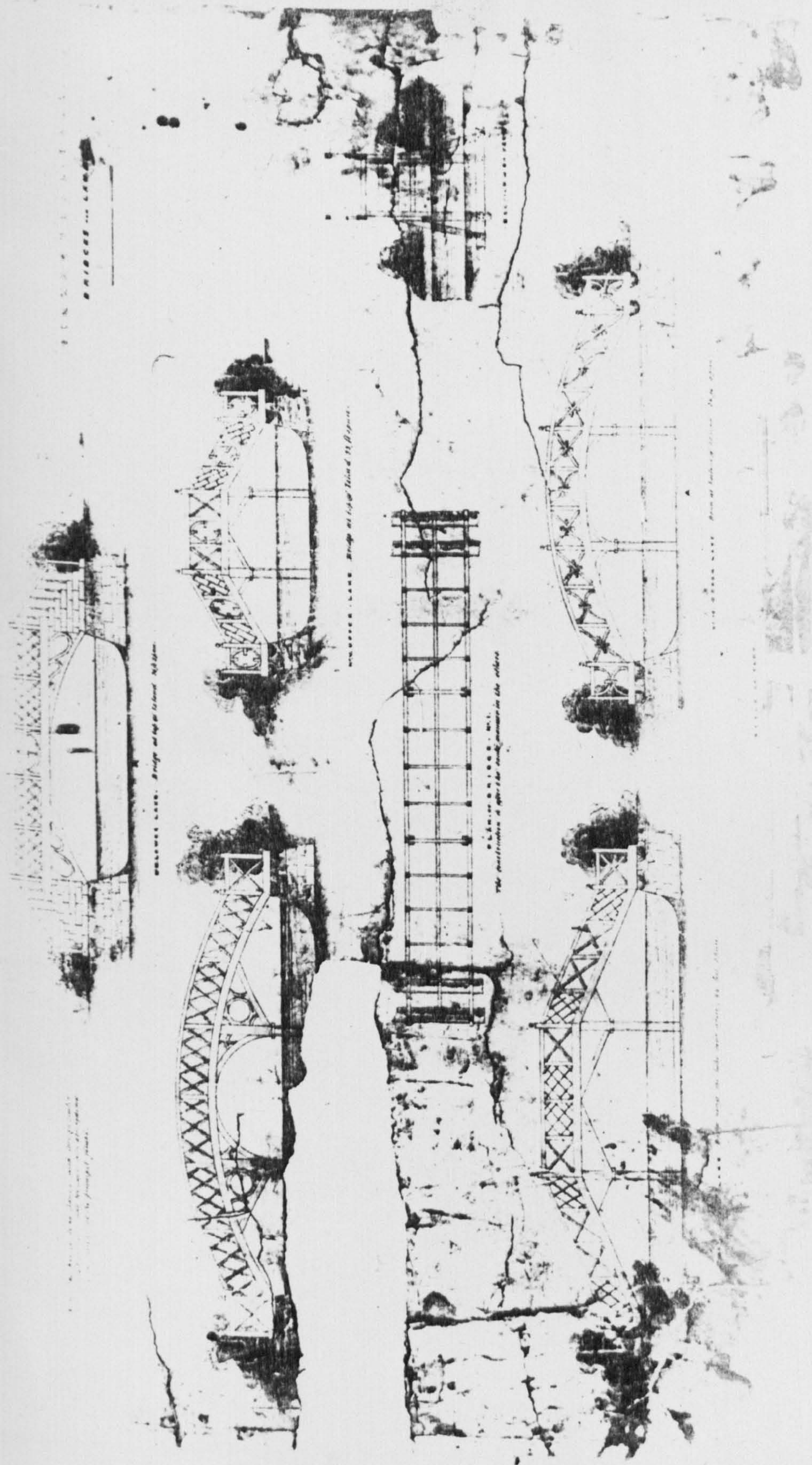


Figure 48 Designs for bridges, Birkenhead Park (Birkenhead Library)



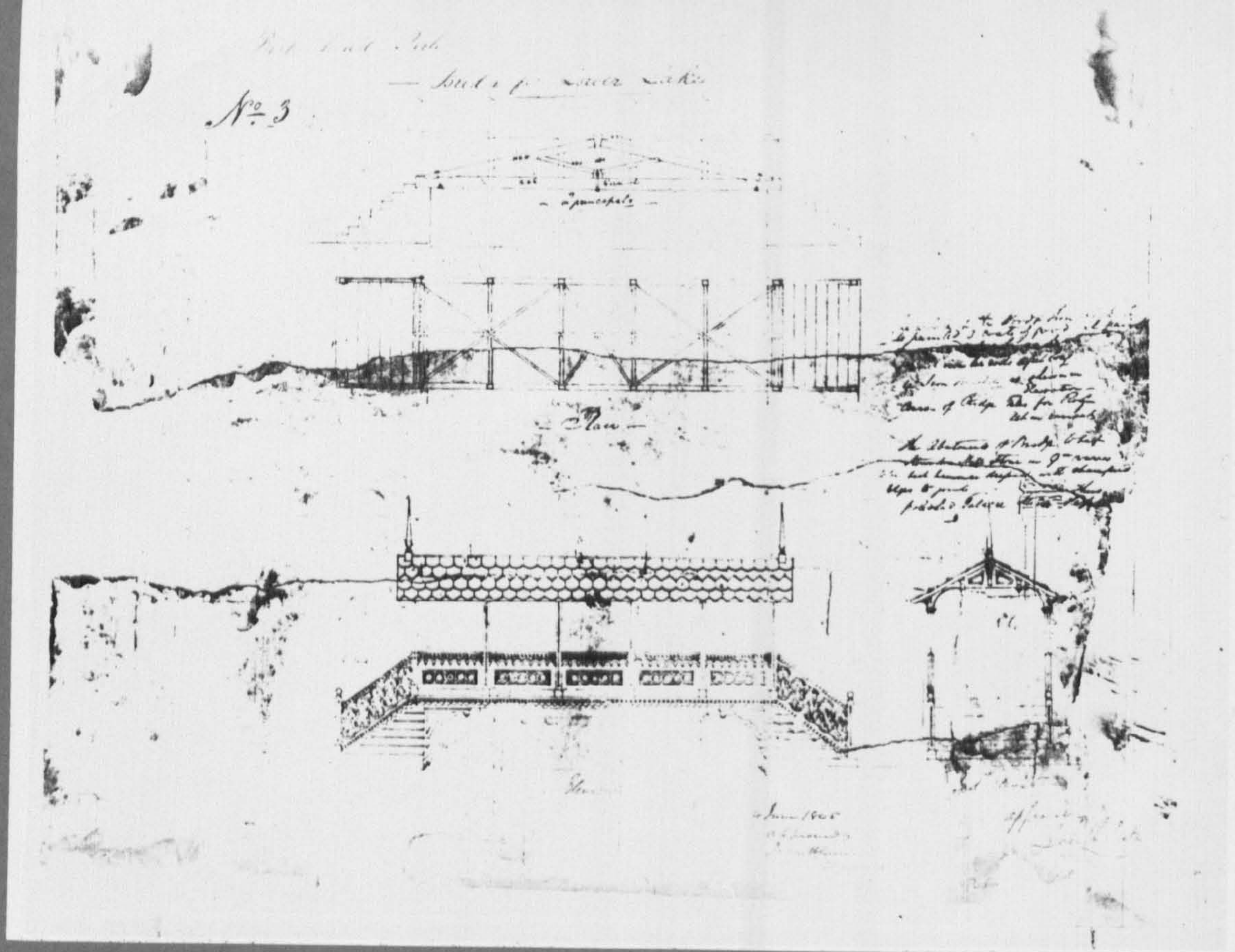


Figure 49 Swiss bridge, design, Birkenhead Park (Birkenhead Library)  
 Figure 50 Rustic bridge, Birkenhead Park (Ibid.)



Rustic Bridge, Birkenhead Park.

Eng'd by Newman & Co. 48, Watling St. London.



Other buildings in Victoria Park included the Burdett-Coutts fountain, already mentioned, and new summer houses which were erected near the south side of the ornamental lake in 1860.<sup>49</sup> In 1868 a petition to erect a maze was presented,<sup>50</sup> and plans for one drawn up.<sup>51</sup> Parks could also provide the final resting places for architectural elements from elsewhere. Figure 51 shows one of the two alcoves in Victoria Park. These dated from circa 1760 and had formed part of Taylor and Dance's London Bridge.<sup>52</sup>

Unless a municipal park was developed on a site where a major building already existed, the scale of park buildings generally tended to be small and designed to fit each individual purpose rather than combining several functions within one large building. The main entrance at Birkenhead, which combined this function with that of the entrance lodges was an exception. A design for a multi-purpose pavilion with conservatories attached can be seen in Figure 52. This was a competition design presented by a student named T.K. Hill in 1848 and it included card-rooms, a ballroom, billiard room, picture gallery and refreshment room. The scale of the building was substantial, the height of the tower 58 feet and the maximum length of the building 126 feet. The ballroom, however, was not large, 38 feet by 20 feet, and as can be seen on the plan, the refreshment room was large enough for only one table. Alastair Rowan<sup>53</sup> states that this was a competition design for a municipal pavilion; however, this application is not stated anywhere on the drawing. It would appear from the scale of the refreshment room and the ballroom that it was not intended for such a use but was more likely intended as a private pleasure palace. Moreover, the inclusion of card-rooms would indicate its <sup>? inappropriateness</sup> unsuitability for municipal use. The association between cards, gambling and pleasure gardens, which had for some time been falling into disrepute, made it unlikely that such facilities would have met with municipal approval.

### Playground and Gymnastic Equipment

The Manchester/Salford Parks and Victoria Park included gymnasias and playgrounds within their design but Paxton's initial design for Birkenhead Park did not. In Queen's Park in 1848, the boys' playground contained "eight swings, a 'giant strides' post, and the gymnastic apparatus" and this writer made a clear distinction between playground





Figure 51 Alcove, Victoria Park (GLC Record Office)



DESIGN FOR A PAVILION  
WITH CONCENTRIC STAIRS

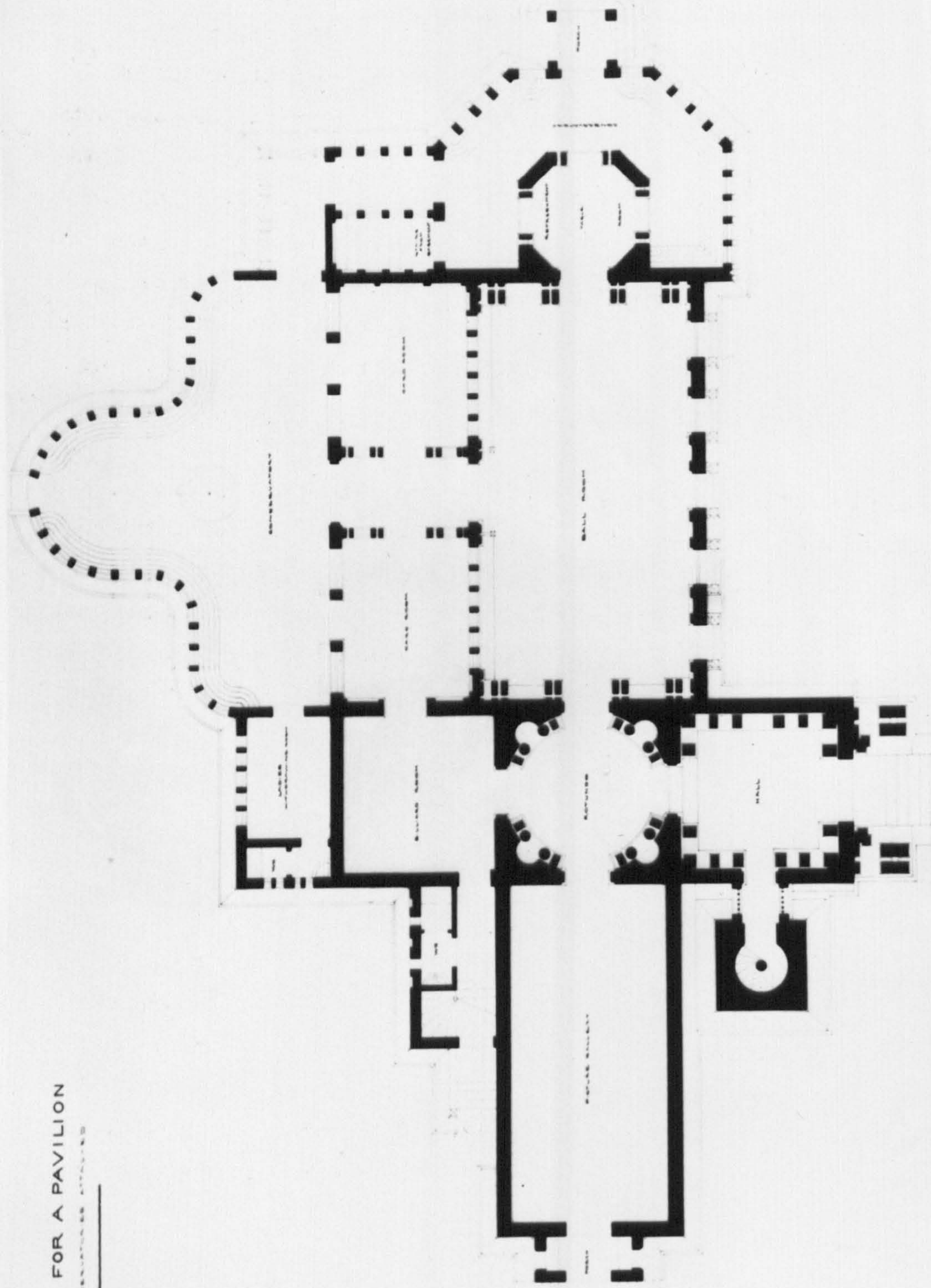


Figure 52 T.K. Hill, Design for a pavilion, 1848 (R.I.B.A.)



equipment and gymnastic apparatus.<sup>54</sup> In the corner of Figure 14 part of the gymnastic apparatus of Queen's Park can be seen. This pole could be swung from or "walked" along using the hands in a similar way to that shown in Figure 53 for "walking" the ladder.<sup>55</sup> Other gymnastics included pole and rope climbing, and climbing up an inclined plank.<sup>56</sup> Playground equipment included swings, circular swings and seesaws but the equipment most frequently referred to was the giant stride. This consisted of a pole whose top was of iron and round this an iron cap, in a socket, revolved. Hooks with ropes on them were attached to the cap and the last three feet of the ropes could be knotted every three or four inches, in order to improve the grip. The ropes could have a cross-stick through a loop at the end, or they could be without this. The aim was to hold on to the ropes and leap in giant strides around the pole.<sup>57</sup> (Figure 54). That such equipment was an innovation in the 1840s can be deduced from the request by the superintendent of Victoria Park for instructions on how it should be used and also how to prevent the loose ropes from being stolen.<sup>58</sup> Although such equipment was structurally quite simple, there was apparently sufficient business for a company to be set up in 1846 to manufacture playground and gymnastic apparatus. This was B. Hirst & Sons Ltd., Halifax, Yorkshire.<sup>59</sup> Figure 55 shows a playground in Victoria Park circa 1914, the giant strides can be seen on the left.

### Conclusion

The problem of accommodating a range of activities within the initial design seems to have been considered most comprehensively by Major at the Manchester/Salford Parks. In Victoria Park, the design evolved gradually over a number of years and a variety of activities was incorporated within the design. Paxton's design for Birkenhead was concerned with the planting and landscaping of the park. The location of the cricket ground, quoits and other activities was not specified by Paxton but was negotiated by the Birkenhead Road and Improvement Committee and Kemp.

All the parks featured buildings, but the number and variety of these depended on the size of the park. Park buildings and structures fulfilled a number of physical functions such as shelter in bad weather and accommodation for park-keepers. Most of the buildings within the parks were small-scale, and a variety of architectural styles was introduced which accorded with the principles of the picturesque. But, in addition



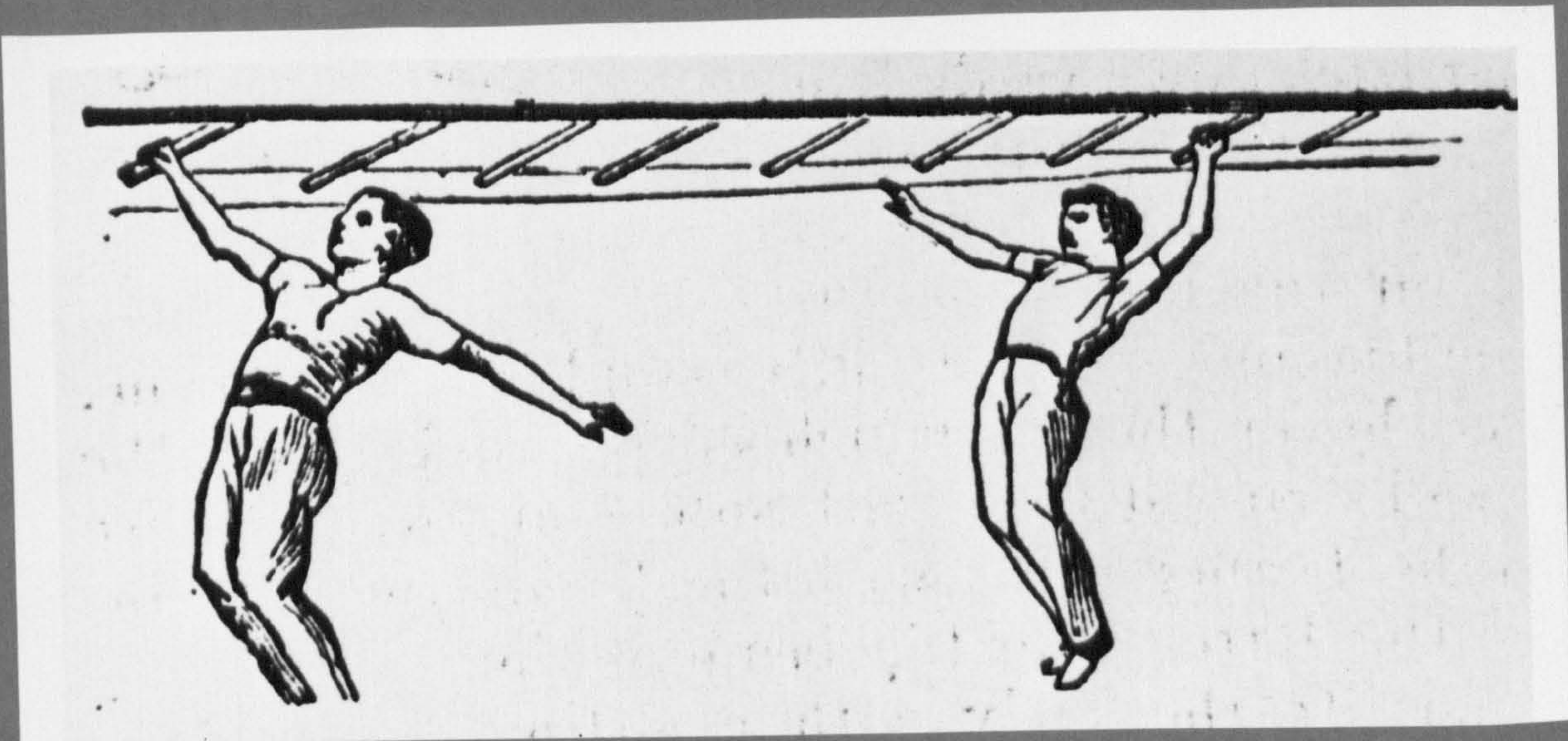


Figure 53 Walking the ladder (Cassell, op.cit. p.188)

Figure 54 Giant stride (Ibid. p.190)

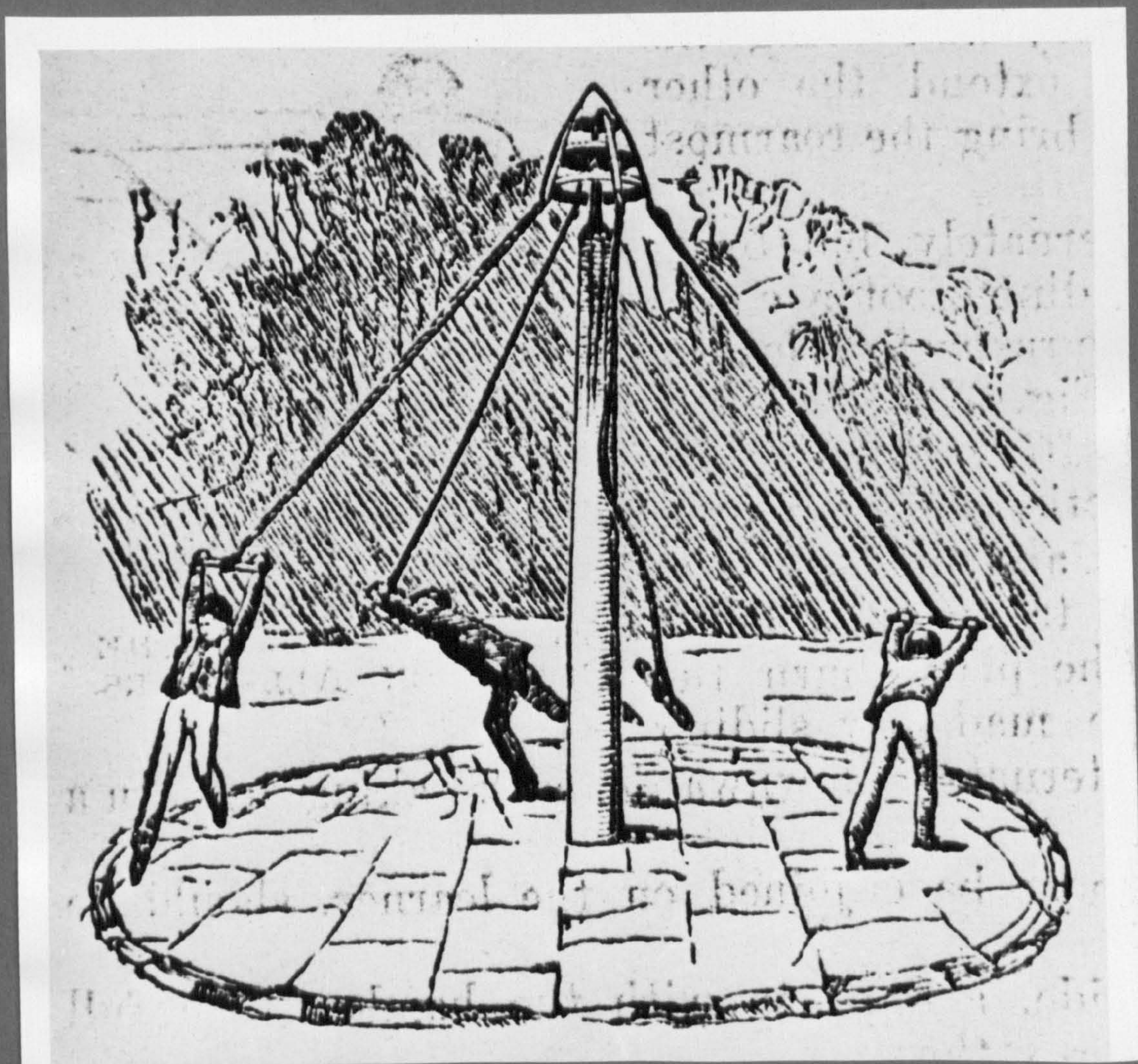






Figure 55 Playground, Victoria Park, c.1914 (GLC Record Office)



to these physical functions, other functions were evident. The parks were railed and gated and clearly separated from their surroundings. The scale of the lodges at the main gates and the scale of the main gates themselves reinforced the message that the area within was different from its surroundings, while the regulations posted at the main entrance spelled out the standards of behaviour that would be allowed within. Commemorative statues reinforced the point that the standards within the park were ruling class standards and that park users could and should look up both literally and metaphorically to those commemorated. Trophies of war reinforced the message of patriotism to all the passers-by while geological specimens encouraged curiosity and stimulated the educational function of the parks.

The design, buildings and structures of the park thus cannot be seen solely in terms of their physical function for their social and political role was of great importance. This becomes even more apparent when ruling class attitudes towards recreation are examined and the permitted uses of the parks analysed. (—



### Notes and References

- 1 For full details see Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit.
- 2 According to Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. pp.47-51, Richard Vaughan Yates consulted Paxton about the design of Prince's Park, Liverpool in 1842. The Birkenhead Commissioners reported that they had obtained Paxton's services to lay out the new park on 1 August 1843 (Liverpool Mercury, 4 August 1843, p.258)
- 3 For details of the increase in the value of land due to the development of the park, see pp. 129-130
- 4 Repton, Sketches and Hints, op.cit. p.72
- 5 Olmsted, F.L. Walks and Talks on an American Farmer in England, London, 1852, p.79
- 6 Birkenhead Road and Improvement Committee (BRIC) Minutes, 1845-7, p.118. Letter from Mr J. Paxton to Birkenhead Improvement Commissioners, 27 August 1845
- 7 Ibid. p.119
- 8 BRIC Minutes, 1847-50, 29 March 1848, p.135
- 9 BRIC Minutes, 1845-7, 13 August 1845, p.111
- 10 BRIC Minutes, 1845-7, 6 May 1846, p.229
- 11 BRIC Minutes, 1847-50, 28 March 1848, p.164
- 12 BRIC Minutes, 1847-50, 2 March 1848, p.111
- 13 Ibid. p.127
- 14 The Strangers' Guide Through Birkenhead, Birkenhead, 1847, p.34
- 15 BRIC Minutes, 1850-3, 27 June 1850, p.41
- 16 BRIC Minutes, 1853-58, 5 October 1857
- 17 Games of football prohibited (BRIC Minutes, 1858-63, 14 March 1861, p.197) Later that year a piece of park pasture-land was set aside for football from 1 October to 31 March inclusive (BRIC Minutes, 1858-63, 20 November 1861, p.262)
- 18 BRIC Minutes, 1853-7, 3 April 1854, p.67
- 19 Illustrated London News, Vol. 43, No. 1222, 19 September 1863, pp.277-8
- 20 Pennethorne's plan of 1831 is reproduced in Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. p.113



- 21 Illustrated London News, Vol. 2, No. 59, 17 June 1843, p.426
- 22 Victoria Park Papers (VPP) Vol. 2, 1845-6, 25 November 1845
- 23 VPP, Vol. 2, 1845-6, 18 May 1846
- 24 VPP, Vol. 3, 1847-52, 17 September 1847
- 25 Illustrated London News, Vol. 8, No. 209, 2 May 1846, p.285
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 VPP, Vol. 2, 1845-6, 27 June 1845
- 28 VPP, Vol. 4, 1853-60, 12 December 1854
- 29 VPP, Vol. 5, 1861-9, 27 May 1861
- 30 This building was damaged by bombs during World War II and was subsequently demolished.
- 31 Smith, op.cit. p.161
- 32 John Robertson had been involved in the design of the model village at Edensor, near Chatsworth c.1840 (See Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. p.163)
- 33 "Peel Park and the Museum", Guide to the Collections, Salford, 23 May 1860
- 34 The inscription over the arch reads 'Victoria Arch AD MDCCCLIX'
- 35 Illustrated London News, Vol. 62, No. 1754, 12 April 1873, p.350
- 36 "Peel Park and the Museum", Guide to the Collections, op.cit. (For further details of royal commemorative statuary, see Darby, E. Statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert: A Study in Commemorative Statuary, 1837-1924, Ph.D. Thesis, Courtauld Institute, London University, 1983)
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.30
- 39 VPP, Vol. 2, 1845-6, 17 February 1845
- 40 The Builder, Vol. 5, No. 210, 9 January 1847, p.11
- 41 VPP, Vol. 3, 1847-52, 6 December 1847
- 42 VPP, Vol. 4, 1853-60, 17 September 1857
- 43 Ricauti, T.J. Sketches for Rustic Work Including Bridges, Park and Garden Buildings, Seats and Furniture, with Descriptions and Estimates of Buildings, London, 1848 (No page numbers)
- 44 Chambers, W. Plans, Elevations, Sections and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surry (sic), London, 1763



- 45 Olmsted, op.cit. p.80 No illustrations of this have so far been located.
- 46 VPP, Vol. 3, 1847-52, 2 February 1849
- 47 Major, op.cit. p.90
- 48 This was erected in 1865. Most parks installed them somewhat later; Albert Park, Middlesborough, 1890; People's Park, Halifax, 1897; Peel Park, Bradford, 1902. Their design will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Ten.
- 49 VPP, Vol. 5, 1861-9, 27 May 1861
- 50 VPP, Vol. 5, 1861-9, 1 October 1868
- 51 VPP, Vol. 5, 1861-9, 27 October 1868. No evidence has been found that this maze was ever built.
- 52 Pevsner, N. The Buildings of England: London, London, 1952, p.173
- 53 Rowan, A. Garden Buildings, London, 1968, pp.63-4
- 54 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.30
- 55 Cassell's Complete Book of Sports and Pastimes, London, 1903, p.188
- 56 A Few Pages About Manchester, op.cit. p.30
- 57 Cassell's Complete Book of Sports and Pastimes, op.cit. p.190
- 58 VPP, Vol. 3, 1847-52, 14 May 1847
- 59 B. Hirst & Sons Ltd.. Advertisement in Pettigrew, op.cit. p.vi. Unfortunately, all company records relating to this period were destroyed in a fire. According to Saint, A. "Safety First", New Statesman, 22 February 1980, p.291 "playground equipment appears to have been expressly manufactured only since the first world war ..." The discovery of the date of this company would appear to contradict this statement.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE RECREATION "PROBLEM"

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century the need for parks was identified against a background of severe social unrest and an increasingly polarising class system between workers and employers. These increasing class divisions were reflected in recreation as well as in work. The park promoters of the 1830s and those in Manchester in 1844 clearly saw parks in terms of the physical, social and moral benefits that they could bring to the working classes in particular.

By 1850 the economy of the country was expanding and the social unrest associated with Chartism had abated, but the question of working-class recreation not only remained but received renewed attention, due largely to the changes that were taking place in the length of the working day and working week. These changes will be examined together with the changes in statutory holidays in order to identify the opportunities for working class recreation in the period of this study.

Throughout the nineteenth century, recreation reflected the complexity of a rapidly developing society which was excited by new technology and new uses of wealth. It was the subject of many conflicting opinions but, among the most influential in terms of their effect on park facilities, were the Sabbatarians and the Temperance Movement. The Sabbatarians were pro-drink whereas the Temperance Movement was both anti-drink and anti ~~the~~ Sabbatarians. The contradictions presented by both affected ideas on how recreation time should be spent, particularly on Sundays, the one day when working people had the opportunity for recreation. Some of these contradictions will be examined in order to assess their effects on park facilities.

#### Opportunities for Recreation: Statutory Holidays

If we are to consider the opportunities for recreation in terms of the time available, then we must look at the length of the working day and working week, at the number of agreed holidays, and at how the pattern of these changed during the period of this study. The decline of



traditional holidays associated with religious holy days accelerated, due not only to the adverse economic conditions of the late 1840s but also because of the new opportunities for pleasure afforded by the railways.<sup>1</sup> Cheap railway excursions date from the early 1840s. Thomas Cook, the secretary of the South Midlands Temperance Association, organised a railway excursion from Leicester to a temperance demonstration in Loughborough in 1841 and began arranging such excursions commercially in 1845.<sup>2</sup> In 1844 a Lancashire manufacturer took some seven hundred of his work people and their friends on a pleasure trip to Fleetwood and the following year the Manchester Guardian commented on the large numbers of people leaving Manchester by rail at Whitsuntide (estimated at 150,000). 1845 was the first year of cheap fares at 1d/mile.<sup>3</sup>

Under the 1833 Factory Act holidays were made statutory for young workers.<sup>4</sup> The minimum number of these holidays was four days a year or eight half-days and a whole day at Christmas and Good Friday, but there were many variations between regions and trades. Reports on factory conditions identified three groups of "holidays": those enforced by employers due to the state of the industry, when employees were laid off or sacked (though the term would not be used in this way today); time taken off by employees without the agreement of employers; and time off recognised by both employers and employees.<sup>5</sup> It was not until the passing of the Bank Holiday Act in 1871 that legislative measures were taken to increase existing holidays to include Boxing Day, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and the first Monday in August.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the century most of the traditional holidays had been replaced by these four official holidays and skilled workers were allowed a week's holiday with pay. But unskilled and semi-skilled workers often did not even get pay for the four Bank Holidays. Thus not only did the number of holidays change in the period 1845-80 but there were also changes in the type of holiday activity associated with them.

One of the questions raised by employers and reformers was not that of increasing holidays with pay, but whether it was in the interests of employees to have more unpaid holidays since it would mean financial sacrifice to them. This attitude came over clearly in a contemporary article which recognised that relaxation and recreation were necessary for everyone, and that the present system of holidays was inadequate



for the millions who labour six days a week.

There is no problem more difficult of solution than that which involves the affording of more holidays to the working classes, without at the same time diminishing their hours of subsistence.

But, the article continued, as it was not possible to interfere in the relationship between employer and employee without detriment to the latter, the next best thing would be to give working men and women the opportunity to spend time in the fresh air:

(in) the shade of trees, by the margin of fair waters, and in the grateful freshness of grass ... let there be no people's town or district without its people's park. Happily this idea has been recognised.<sup>7</sup>

The opportunity for such activities depended not so much on the number of statutory holidays as the length of the working day and of the working week, and on the location of the parks.

### The Working Day

Parks are well for those only who can have time to perambulate them, and baths are of little use to such dirty people as do not leave work until eight o'clock at night. We protest that it is a mere burlesque upon philanthropy to make provision for these benefits, with a continuance of twelve hours' labour and fifteen hours' occupation for every manufacturing operative above thirteen years of age.<sup>8</sup>

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the working day, week, and year lengthened and it was not until 1836 that the concept of the Normal Day was established by the London engineers: this was ten hours per day, sixty hours per week. The Ten Hour Act 1847 brought the working week for women and children under eighteen in textile factories down to sixty hours, with work stopping on Saturday at 2.00 p.m.<sup>9</sup> A series of reports on Manchester in 1848, by the author and journalist A.B. Reach, indicated the benefits of the Ten Hour working day which had then been in operation for just over a year. Reach saw these benefits mainly in terms of opportunities for adult education and his selection of benefits indicated his preoccupations perhaps more than those of the working people that he was investigating. He noted the gradually increasing facilities that were becoming



available, such as libraries, institutes, and Sunday Schools, and how well these were supported. Musical halls of several varieties were described but public houses were not emphasised. He reported on Manchester's outdoor facilities:

During the last few years the corporation of Manchester have been flinging open cul-de-sacs, and running airy streets through overcrowded neighbourhoods. Parks are being provided with gymnastic apparatus for children; and an ample supply of the purest water is slowly but surely making its way from the distant hills.<sup>10</sup>

He quoted a discussion with a Hulme overlooker who approved of the cheap summer trips that the railways were giving, for he had been able to "take his good woman one hundred and twelve miles from Manchester", explaining the country to her as they went along. Sometimes in his department they worked so fast that they got ahead of the others and had a half-day holiday. Recently he had taken his family and all the workers in his department out to enjoy themselves in the fields, "a far better place than the public house".<sup>11</sup>

In Bolton a meeting was held in 1852 to discuss an exhibition to commemorate the passing of the Ten Hours Bill. The subjects discussed included the moral and physical training of the people who worked in the factories, and Robert Heywood a prominent citizen and alderman suggested that the town should acquire a municipal park, but it was not until 1866 that this was achieved.<sup>12</sup> This example pinpoints the direct link that was being made between the shorter working day of ten hours and the recreations of working people.

Factories and workshops with an established pattern of work made the concept of the Normal Day applicable but it was not readily applicable to skilled workers working on piece rates or to small workshops, nor to unskilled workers in the continuous-process industries. In blast furnaces, chemical works, gas plants, a twelve-hour shift system was generally worked, seven days a week. These industries expanded during the 1860s and 1870s and, with them, the number of people working a 72-84 hour week.<sup>13</sup> Nor was the Normal Day applicable to domestic workers or those in the transport industries. Their hours remained well above those established by the Normal Day.



The regular pattern of work established by the mechanised industries of the North contrasted with the irregular working week of workshop industries using traditional methods of production in the Midlands and Black Country. There the pattern was three or four days of intensive labour at the end of the week with a holiday on Monday and possibly Tuesday. This irregular pattern was only gradually broken down in the 1870s and 1880s and it persisted much longer in the coal-mining industry.

The early 1870s, with their favourable trade conditions, saw the demand for the Nine-Hour Day and, in 1893/4, the Eight-Hour Day Movement. The gradual decrease in the normal working day was achieved during the period circa 1840 to the end of the century by the trade union movement, which provided the organisational framework and, perhaps, a better-settled pattern of wages, within which shorter hours could be demanded effectively when the economic conditions were favourable. This decrease in hours implied an increase in time for recreation but the relationship was not necessarily a direct one, since the length of the normal working day did not indicate the amount of overtime worked.

### The Working Week

The development of the normal working day was linked to pressure for the Saturday half-holiday, and an active Half-Holiday Movement began in Manchester in 1843 among clerks and warehouse workers.<sup>14</sup> The Half-Holiday Movement was concerned not only with the cessation of work at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday but also with the early payment of wages. "We may have early payment of wages without Saturday leisure, but we cannot have Saturday leisure without early payment of wages".<sup>15</sup> Both in turn had a direct link with the whole question as to how Sunday should be kept and hence to the use of parks on that day. One argument was that the Saturday half-holiday would enable working people, excepting shop workers, to do their domestic chores, shop, and even to relax by going on excursions on a Saturday afternoon. As a result, Sunday would be freed to be kept "properly". Others, however, thought that Monday or Wednesday would be better choices for the half-holiday, since Saturday afternoon would "isolate the husband in his enjoyment". How would the orderliness of Sunday, when the home looked its brightest, be preserved

if the wife is taken from her domestic duties ...  
on the Saturday afternoon, to some scene of pleasure?



Or is it intended that the husband should enjoy  
the selfish hours by himself ...?

Purchase of fresh meat and other food could not be made long in advance of Sunday so the provision of the Saturday half-holiday would create "a double labour for the wife" for she would have to clean the house, dress the children and buy the provisions by Saturday mid-day in order to be able to accompany her husband on his holiday trip.

It is essential, in order that this half-holiday movement yield its full fruit, that the social relations of the workman should be especially considered, and the claims of his wife and children, be more carefully provided for than even his own.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout the 1850s there was a steady movement towards the introduction of the Saturday half-holiday and the early payment of wages, with Manchester and the North leading the movement. There were two important regions, however, where this movement was not followed: the Midlands, including Birmingham, and London, to a lesser extent. In neither of these areas had the factory system of production developed in any degree and in both the traditional pattern of work and recreation persisted. In the Midlands the tradition of Saint Monday involved one or two whole days off and this tradition persisted into the 1860s and 1870s in some industries. "In many Birmingham manufactories St Monday is still observed as a holiday and there is an inclination to canonise Tuesday too".<sup>17</sup> However, it was recognised that such holidays were not always voluntary but could be due to difficulties in obtaining raw materials. The tradition of Saint Monday persisted until the 1870s when it declined gradually as mechanisation increased, and was replaced by the Saturday half-holiday.

In London, the main organisation for securing the Saturday half-holiday was the Early Closing Association, whose aims were the reduction of the hours of work, the adoption of the Saturday half-holiday, where practical, and the early payment of wages. Its main concern was with shop assistants and white collar workers and it gained the support of Parliament, church and businessmen in a way that a more radically-based movement would not have done, since its aims were unlikely to conflict with those of industrial employers. Moreover, these aims had a direct bearing on how Sunday should be kept and they coincided with many of the views of the Sabbatarians.



## Sabbatarianism, Sunday and the Parks

The use of parks, the facilities provided and the question of appropriate occupations for Sunday is a complicated one in which one of the major influences was Sabbatarianism. Sabbatarianism before the Civil War advocated devoting the whole of Sunday to religious instruction, and its influence grew in the period following the Reformation. It flourished in the seventeenth century, went into a decline in the eighteenth century, and revived towards the end of that century and gained impetus in the nineteenth century from the formation of the Lord's Day Observance Society. The main emphasis of Sabbatarianism was on sins of omission and sins of commission on Sunday. Despite protestations to the contrary, it did not aim to provide Sunday rest, nor to abolish Sunday work, nor to provide opportunities to worship. Sabbatarianism was important to the provision of recreation facilities because it was concerned with limits to personal freedom of behaviour and with legislation to implement the control of those limits. The Sabbatarian attitude to parks appeared in the Lord's Day Observance Society's Quarterly Publication.

Far better it was even that a man should be feeble and sickly, and have a 'Conscience void of offence towards God', than that he should be strong and healthy through disobeying God.<sup>18</sup>

Sunday in the Sabbatarian view was for spiritual exercises only and amusements should be limited to weekdays. In their view, national disaster would follow if:

bands, sight-seeing, public houses, shopping, public baking, news rooms, pigeon-flying, gardening, funerals, walking, matches, parks, museums, mechanics institutions, lecture halls, and libraries ...<sup>19</sup>

were indulged in on Sundays. But, while Sunday recreations were banned by the Sabbatarians, their attitude to labour was to justify it in terms of "piety and necessity". To people who had ample opportunity to take recreation during the week, the Sabbatarians preached the doctrine that it was a sin to take recreation on Sundays. These same people could, however, justifiably enjoy their servants' labour. (It) also told people who had little opportunity for recreation during the week that, if they did seek to take recreation on Sundays, then they would be made to work seven days a week. So successful were the Sabbatarians in their



propaganda that they convinced working people that, if Sunday amusements were not prohibited, then the religious nature of the day would be broken and with it the embargo on Sunday labour. The result would be increasing competition which would involve the whole working population and destroy their day of rest.<sup>20</sup> The Sabbatarian movement successfully claimed in the 1850s and 60s to be acting on working people's behalf by protecting their right to a day of rest on Sunday. Its influence through the Lord's Day Observance Society attempted to close Regent's Park Zoo, to prevent the sale of tobacco and newspapers and all other Sunday trading, and to ban travelling by canal, railway, and omnibus. Among their successes were the closure of the Crystal Palace on Sundays in 1851 and the closure of the British Museum on Sundays in 1855. Their opposition to Sunday travel affected the attitudes of the public and railway policy. The number of Sunday excursions to Brighton fell in the 1860s from 6 or 7,000 to 2,000, and in many parts of the country there were no trains at all.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1850s attitudes to the question of music in the parks reflected the reactions to Sabbatarian influence. For example, the Manchester Council decided on 6 August 1856, as a result of Sabbatarian influence, to ban Sunday concerts. The official reason given, however, was that they clashed with the open air meetings of the Sunday Schools.<sup>22</sup> Earlier that year bands had played on Sunday in both Queen's Park and Philips Park and, on 12 June 1856, a broadsheet entitled Sunday Music for the People announced the formation of a general committee:

to promote the innocent recreation of the people on Sundays by the introduction of appropriate Musical Performances in places of public resort, in accordance with the plan pursued in London ... and in Leeds ...<sup>23</sup>

The proposal was that bands should play in each of the Manchester parks on 22 June from 4.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. or 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. The music would include works by Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, etc. "avoiding all dancing music".<sup>24</sup> It was agreed that the band should play on the Sunday following that initially proposed and Inspector Gee of C Division reported that at Philips Park the number of visitors far exceeded the normal attendance. Not less than 9,500 people entered the park during the afternoon but, as visitors did not remain long, at no time were there more than 2,000 people within the gates. They were "chiefly respectable



working classes (with) a considerable number of children" and also a "numerous class of loose rough characters"; however, only four drunken persons were seen among the visitors.<sup>25</sup> At Queen's Park, according to Inspector Taylor of E Division, 10,979 people entered the park during the afternoon. The Parks Committee decided, however, that the question of music in the parks was a matter that should be decided by the Council and in August music in the parks in Manchester was banned.<sup>26</sup>

In Eastbourne and Birmingham, Sunday bands were also withdrawn at this time but, in the case of Birmingham, the reasons had as much to do with costs as with Sabbatarian pressure.<sup>27</sup> In Nottingham and Accrington, however, Sunday bands continued to play during the summer months but in Accrington the band played without a drum "which we do not consider to be a Sunday instrument".<sup>28</sup>

The Sabbatarians argued that, if all places of recreation were closed and all railways and shops, then all classes would be affected equally. They were unable to see that superior resources enabled such restrictions to be overcome and that their recommendations thus placed greater burdens on the poor than on the rich. They distinguished between private and public control and this allowed them to justify the use of horse carriages but not railways, and the use of parks and gardens by keyholders, but not by the general public.<sup>29</sup>

Above all, Sabbatarians were concerned with maintaining authority. In their view, it was better to gain political advantage by defending the right of working people to drink beer on Sundays than to give them the opportunity to use libraries or museums or to have access to the open air. The Sabbatarian attacks on Sunday newspapers, museums and lectures, their safeguarding of Sunday Schools and the Parliamentary preference for drink, rather than museums, and music in the parks, related directly to political power and authority and the question of how individual freedom in the area of recreation should be regulated and controlled.

The efforts of the Sabbatarians were countered by the National Sunday League, founded in 1855, which argued that museums, the relocated Crystal Palace, and similar institutions should be open on Sundays, and music provided "in the open air in a beautiful park".<sup>30</sup> The League



also supported the Society for Securing the Performance of Sunday Music in the Parks, which set up private bands to replace military ones and, after circa 1856, Sabbatarian influence on music in the parks tended to decline.<sup>31</sup>

### The Temperance Movement

The Temperance Movement aimed to transform social behaviour. The teetotal, non-conformist middle class members of the movement sought to achieve this by attacking "Drink", which they thought a moral, religious and social evil and which was particularly reprehensible on Sundays. In Parliament the movement sought to make the Government bow to religious pressure, but the Central Association for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor on Sundays failed to achieve its aim and, as a result, public houses remained open on Sundays while places of "innocent amusement" such as museums remained closed.<sup>32</sup>

The effects of the Temperance Movement on municipal parks showed themselves in a variety of ways. In the majority of municipal parks investigated the sale of alcohol was prohibited and, in some parks, even the refreshment rooms which served only tea and coffee, were closed during Sunday church services.<sup>33</sup> This may also have been due partly to Sabbatarian pressure. Roundhay Park, Leeds, however, provided an interesting exception and also illustrated the effects on local government of the controversial issue of the control of the drink trade. There had been Temperance members on Leeds Town Council since the early 1860s and their spokesman was a Quaker leather manufacturer, George Tatham. When Roundhay Park was acquired as a municipal park in 1872, Tatham proposed that the sale of all alcohol in the park should be banned. The Council wanted to encourage people to use the park, which was five miles from the centre of the town, so they agreed only to ban the sale of spirits. In 1873 the Council planned to let Roundhay Mansion, which was in the park, as a hotel and Tatham organised a petition from more than 11,000 inhabitants calling for a ban on the sale of alcohol there. The annual debate in Leeds Council on the renewal of the Roundhay Hotel licence then became a measure of the strength of the Temperance members on the Council, but they only achieved a short-lived triumph of one month in 1884 when the Council decided not to re-apply for the licence by 28 votes to 24.<sup>34</sup>



The use of parks as an alternative form of recreation to public houses had been recognised by the SCPW in 1833 but it was not until 1851 that statistics were provided to "prove" this. At Macclesfield, the decrease in drunkenness due to the opening of a municipal park was cited in percentages. It was claimed that since the opening of the park, cases of "drunkenness and disorderly conduct" had decreased by 23%, the use of obscene and profane language by 60%, gambling by 50%, and summary charges of every class by 26% since the opening of the park three years ago. The author qualified this by saying that it was impossible to attribute this improvement solely to one institution since, at the same time that the park opened, there were Sunday Schools and mechanic institutions which also contributed by providing opportunities for rational recreation. However, he continued, all these institutions had existed for years, whereas:

the park has existed just for the period that has witnessed such a remarkable decrease of those offences which are committed by persons exposed entirely to debasing pleasures, having no means of innocent recreation.<sup>35</sup>

A report on the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in 1874 made the similar point. The Crystal Palace provided opportunities for rational recreation, for the site included conservatories, a park, and a museum and, although alcohol was served:

Twenty-two years of experience show how the millions appreciate such a place of wholesome recreation and refinement ... Upward of thirty millions have been there, and not one in a million have been reported by the police as being drunk and disorderly.<sup>36</sup>

The Temperance Movement was one organisation among many that were concerned to promote alternative recreations to the public house. "The public house is for the operative what the public squares were for the ancients" wrote a Frenchman who visited Manchester in 1844. Saturday and Sunday were spent in intoxication because:

in Protestant countries ... bigoted Puritanism ... is opposed to all innocent recreation ... the more rigorously the Sabbath is observed, the more frequented are the public houses and gin shops.<sup>37</sup>

Public houses were seen as places frequented by the working classes where the other classes had no contact or influence and "the labouring



population ... lose the benefit of some control from contact with persons of superior status".<sup>38</sup> Parks could provide a means whereby such contact could be promoted but not everyone agreed that this would necessarily promote social harmony and social control.

There is a very strong opinion abroad about amusements, free parks, free libraries ... and the enormous evils, morally and socially, arising from making any kind of amusement for the lower classes, what may be called eleemosynary (i.e. free) ... nothing is more mischievous in the present state of society ... it is a most dangerous principle to introduce.<sup>39</sup>

If the different classes were brought into contact with each other they would see each other and make comparisons. Working people would have their feelings of disadvantage reinforced every time they went to a free park or library and, instead of social harmony being promoted, the effect would be to increase social divisiveness:

as to Peel Park (Salford) I cannot go a dozen yards in that place without seeing the invidious distinction of classes marked out, and the poor man tainted with the boon that is extended to him, which is a very great mischief.<sup>40</sup>

The implication here was that it was advisable to maintain the isolation of the classes otherwise more problems might result. Although this appears to have been a minority view, it does indicate that by 1853 the question of whether social contact would promote social harmony or whether it would result in increased social divisiveness was a matter of debate.

### Rational Recreation and the "Lessons" of Nature

It has justly been observed that in the same proportion as sources of innocent amusement and healthy recreations are provided for a people, in the same proportion do they become virtuous and happy. The Commissioners of Birkenhead have therefore set a good example to the directors of public affairs in large towns ...<sup>41</sup>

so the earliest guide to Birkenhead Park observed. These innocent amusements included not only walks and sports facilities but also contact with nature which, it was thought, would purify and refine the visitors. The guide did not, however, pin-point which particular visitors were in need of purification and refinement.



The term rational recreation could imply concern with "re-creation": that is, the refreshment of the mind and spirit "necessary for the right development of our being". There was a clear distinction between rational recreation and those forms of pleasure which involved:

throwing off restraint and letting the passions loose ... The more we encourage rational recreation ... the more we lessen sexual license and its evil consequences, excessive alcohol consumption, the delight in immoral exhibitions, the admiration for torturing animals dependent on us for protection; and above all, the more we diminish the number of human beings that pander to the false pleasures of those who can or will pay for and buy them.<sup>42</sup>

Rational recreation here implied reducing the profit motive in exploiting recreation. It also involved education so that people could be taught how to use their recreation in creative ways:

for even the Government cannot be made to see that the cost of the singing master in the People's education will be a hundredfold compensated for by the means it will give the children of doing something better for amusement than pitch and toss, the roaring of obscene songs, and the torturing of little animals.<sup>43</sup>

Education in this view involved an investment which would result in a greater number of people enjoying positive forms of recreation. Such activities would not be harmful in any sense to anyone, but would re-create the body, mind and spirit, so they would include active sports as well as the quiet contemplation of nature in the parks. Education had a strong part to play in rational recreation as could be seen in the emphasis on the labelling of trees at Derby Arboretum and the recommendation to label plants in the Manchester parks, and the planting of the trees in Victoria Park in the sequence of a scientific arboretum.<sup>44</sup> But apart from such direct botanically educational measures, it was thought that the park itself, through its ordering and control of nature, could provide lessons for the visitor.

Chapter Six showed that the layout and planting of the parks generally conformed to the principles of landscape gardening current at the time. There is no evidence that Paxton, Major or any of the other major designers of the period saw their work in public and municipal parks other than in terms of providing the best possible environment with trees, shrubs, grass and flowers for a wide range of activities and large numbers of people. Others, however, commented on the lessons that the ordered and



controlled nature of the parks could provide for the visitor.

The other elevating influences of the park must by degrees train and educate the people to neatness in dress, habit of order, and respectability of conduct and behaviour. It is remarkable how the very perfection of order and condition in which the park is kept, influences the manner and conduct of those who hitherto had been unaccustomed to the sphere of such examples. It is one secret of its success in training the unruly.<sup>45</sup>

This commentator clearly saw that social control could be enhanced through this role of the park. But these lessons of neatness and orderliness in the park were also subject to contradiction from the lesson of nature and its growth. No two plants or trees are ever the same and this could imply to those who wished to absorb the message that each person was an individual free to grow and develop as best they could within the constraints of their particular environment. Against this, and reinforcing the former argument, was the example of carpet-bedding, in which the plants were cared for until it was time that they were replaced by the next season's plants. They were discarded at the end of their useful life and, in effect, their life mirrored that experienced by working people. Such issues, however, could not be substantiated either one way or another and what was far more important to park users was the existence of the park and the variety of activities which could be pursued within it.

### Conclusion

As the nineteenth century progressed, local authorities acquired increasing powers and responsibilities for improving the physical environment, and the concept of physical health was extended to include social health and moral health. As a result, facilities for recreation came to be seen as part of the basic social equipment of urban life. The attitude to recreation that lay behind this was based on a belief in the moral basis of social behaviour, and in the duty of the leisured and wealthy to set an example by their conduct to those less fortunate, in dedicating themselves to intellectual and moral improvement.

Some thought civic consciousness and municipal pride could be measured in terms of whether a city had or planned a library, museum, art gallery, parks, baths or gymnasias. When the Mayor of Leeds, John Barran,



advocated the purchase of Roundhay Park in 1871 by the Council, he spoke of it in these terms:

if they got Roundhay Park, it would be as great a credit to them as their town hall. It would give them a status in a way few things would, and he thought they should take pride in trying to obtain it.<sup>46</sup>

Parks, libraries and museums were a focus for civic pride since they indicated that a council or corporation was prepared to assume the role of guardian of cultural ideals and had, in principle, the interests of all members of the community at heart. Such facilities would, moreover, enhance democracy since it was assumed that people from all walks of life would use them and benefit from them. It should, however, be recognised who the members of these councils were and whose interests, culture and standards they represented.

During the period circa 1845-80, the time available for recreation increased only gradually and only for certain sectors of the working population. The pattern of holidays changed and new possibilities for recreation developed due in part to the expansion of the railways. The number of statutory holidays could affect the use of parks on those days but the development of the normal working day and the Saturday Half-Holiday Movement were more likely to do so. However, as their adoption varied both geographically and with different types of employment and there was no indication of the amount of overtime worked, it cannot be assumed that time for recreation necessarily increased. Nevertheless, the effect of the Ten Hour Act and the Saturday Half-Holiday Movement was to redirect attention to the "problem" of working class recreation. In addition, the Saturday Half-Holiday Movement linked directly with the whole question of permitted Sunday activities and hence to the use of parks on that day. Here the influence of Sabbatarians was important for the movement sought to ban Sunday recreation and achieved some success in the mid-1850s in banning music in the parks. The Temperance Movement was also important in affecting attitudes to recreation and in reinforcing the promotion of alternative forms of recreation to the public house. Both organisations made important contributions to the question of public and private freedom and limitations to that freedom in the area of recreation.

From the evidence it is clear that throughout the period of this study



certain attitudes and objectives regarding working class recreation continued to be voiced. These included the structuring of recreation in order to compete with such unstructured activities as those that centred on the public house. The images of working people as unruly and undisciplined before "treatment" and neat, docile and orderly afterwards underlined these objectives. That parks were also seen as places of innocent amusement, where the visitors could enjoy the beauty of the flowers and the tranquillity of nature and, in so doing, become virtuous and happy, did not in any way conflict with them.

To the working classes who were the target of these objectives, however, recreation was not a "problem" except in the sense that they could not afford it, had insufficient time for it, or had no access to it, and this becomes clear if we look at their diaries. From such sources we get a much more accurate view of what they saw as important issues in their own lives, and one of the things that received little emphasis in these diaries was their work. What was of far greater importance and formed the topics of those diaries was life outside work with family, friends and workmates, personal relationships, group activities with church or chapel, trade union, temperance society or mechanics institute, visits to fairs or markets, or walks with friends.<sup>47</sup>

Matthew Arnold ironically summarised the recreation "problem" in Culture and Anarchy. The aristocrats (barbarians), he said, had plenty of room to do what they liked on their estates; hunt, shoot, fish, and behave as they pleased (i.e. barbarically). The middle class (Philistines) were so restricted by their social and religious observances that they had little time for pleasure and, in any case, the idea of pleasure for its own sake would have seemed positively sinful to the evangelically-influenced middle class. Thus, doing what one liked did not present a problem so long as only aristocrats and middle class were involved. But, said Arnold, it was "getting inconvenient and productive of anarchy now that the populace wants to do what it likes too".<sup>48</sup> When the objectives regarding working-class recreation are compared with the activities allowed in the municipal parks, then the social and political role of the parks becomes clearer.



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The series of reports "Labour and the Poor" were published by the Morning Chronicle until the end of 1850. They provided the starting point for Henry Mayhew's London Labour and London Poor.  
Reach's reports were written while he was in Manchester rather than when he had finished his stay and they thus have an immediacy and vividness which the Reports of the Parliamentary Commissions on the same subjects lacked. Although the viewpoint of Reach was inevitably that of an outsider, both in terms of geography and class, his sympathy and understanding lacks the patronising tone of so much of the writing of this period.
- 11 Ibid. p.33
- 12 Scholes, J.C. History of Bolton, Bolton, 1892, p.500
- 13 Hodgson, M.C. The Working Day and the Working Week in Victorian Britain, 1840-1900, M.Phil. Thesis, Birkbeck College, London, 1974
- 14 Ibid. p.153
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Quoted in Hodgson, op.cit. p.151
- 16 National Sunday League Record, No. 5, September 1956, p.34



- 17 Report of the Factory Inspector, B.P.P., October 1872, Vol. 19, 1873, p.157. Quoted in Hodgson, op.cit. p.176
- 18 Lord's Day Observance Society, Quarterly Publication, July 1852, pp.306-7. Quoted in Wigley, J. Nineteenth Century Sabbatarianism A Study of Religious, Political and Social Phenomena, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1972, p.351
- 19 Wigley, op.cit. p.53
- 20 Ibid. p.113
- 21 Ibid. p.48
- 22 MBC Proceedings, 6 August 1856. Cited in Redford, A. and Russell, I.S. op.cit. p.221. The resolution was carried by 27 to 18 (National Sunday League Record, No. 5, September 1856, p.37)
- 23 MPPC, Letter Book, MG/68/3/1, 12 June 1856
- 24 Ibid. 20 June 1856
- 25 MPPC Minute Book, 30 June 1856, p.194
- 26 MPPC Minute Book, 2 July 1856, p.194
- 27 National Sunday League Record, No. 5, September 1856, p.37
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Wigley, op.cit. p.105
- 30 National Sunday League Record, No. 5, September 1856, p.35
- 31 Ibid. No. 3, July 1856. In 1857 the Society changed its name to the London Sunday Bands Committee. See Wigley, op.cit. p.200
- 32 Harrison, B. Drink and the Victorians, London, 1871
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- 37 Faucher, op.cit. p.52
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PERMITTED PASTIMES

The previous chapter indicated the various ways in which working class recreation was seen as a "problem", but it did not show how parks were supposed to "solve" these problems. The most direct evidence of this can be obtained from an analysis of the types of activity allowed in the parks. Most of the parks discussed so far had certain features in common, such as open areas of grass, and water, usually in the form of lakes. The grass could be used for sports, concerts or meetings, but it is only if the particular forms of sport allowed are identified and the particular type of meeting that it becomes possible to identify clearly what some of the roles of parks were. Similarly, the lakes were a feature in which the surrounding park was reflected and the ducks swam, but they could also be used for boating, fishing, skating or bathing. As in the example of the use of the grass, it is the choice of activity allowed that is revealing.

The recreations associated with municipal parks ranged from the traditional diversions of meeting friends, walking and sitting, to organised sports and concerts. However, the best documented records of the use of parks tend to be those associated with special events such as royal visits, or with antisocial activities and misdemeanours. The picture gained from such evidence tends to be an unbalanced one, for the activities that were part of everyday life went largely unrecorded. The vivid picture painted by Mrs Layton circa 1865 of the need to get everyone out of the house on washday, and of the happy time spent in Victoria Park in London, is very much part of that hidden history.

My fourth sister and I always stayed away from school on washday to mind the babies. In the summer it was real sport, because so many people did their washing on the same day, and everybody had large families and generally kept the elder girls, and sometimes boys, at home to mind the little ones. We used to plan to go out all together with our babies and prams into Victoria Park. Very few people had prams of their own, but could hire them at 1d. an hour to hold one baby, or 1½d. an hour to hold two. Several mothers would pay a few pence for the hire of a pram and the children used to manage between them how they were to be



used. I need hardly say each pram was used to its full seating capacity. The single pram had always to accommodate two and the double pram three or more, and we always kept them the full length of time for which we had paid. We would picnic on bread and treacle under the trees in the Park, and return home in the evening a troop of tired but happy children.<sup>1</sup>

The individual pleasure gained from the flowers, grass, and trees was rarely recorded but there is evidence of the early recognition of popular interest in parks as places where people without gardens of their own could admire flowers and floral displays. At Birkenhead, Kemp recommended in 1846 that the park should be stocked with fuchsias and "other showy flowering plants", and a garden-frame for propagating them should be acquired, and this was agreed.<sup>2</sup> Eighteen months later it was agreed that plant thinnings be advertised for sale.<sup>3</sup> Further indication of the passion for horticulture can be gained from a print (Figure 56) showing the distribution of plants at Victoria Park in the autumn. The article accompanying this print praised the First Commissioner of Works who, for some years past, had been:

the means of brightening many poor London homes by granting the superintendents of the public parks permission to distribute the plants freely towards the close of autumn ... The industrious pencil of Mr. Harry Furniss shows us how greatly this boon is appreciated in the East End of London ... It is one of the most gratifying signs of the times that each year sees the London parks more and more beautifully embellished with flowers.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Victoria Park's reputation for flowers had been so well established by the 1870s that an address was sent to the Chief Commissioner of Public Works regarding the marvellous progress of the last three years and the "magnificent display and management of flowers".<sup>5</sup> By distributing plants, or offering them for sale, the links between the park and the community were strengthened. Figure 56 is one of the few illustrations showing working people using the parks, but there they are portrayed as caricatures rather than as individuals.

### The Use of Grass

Open grass was often a commanding feature, the green carpet the antithesis to the urban streets and pavements. This grass could be used for crops of hay, for picnics, meetings, grazing sheep, or for a variety of sports, but not for all of these activities concurrently. Therefore choices had



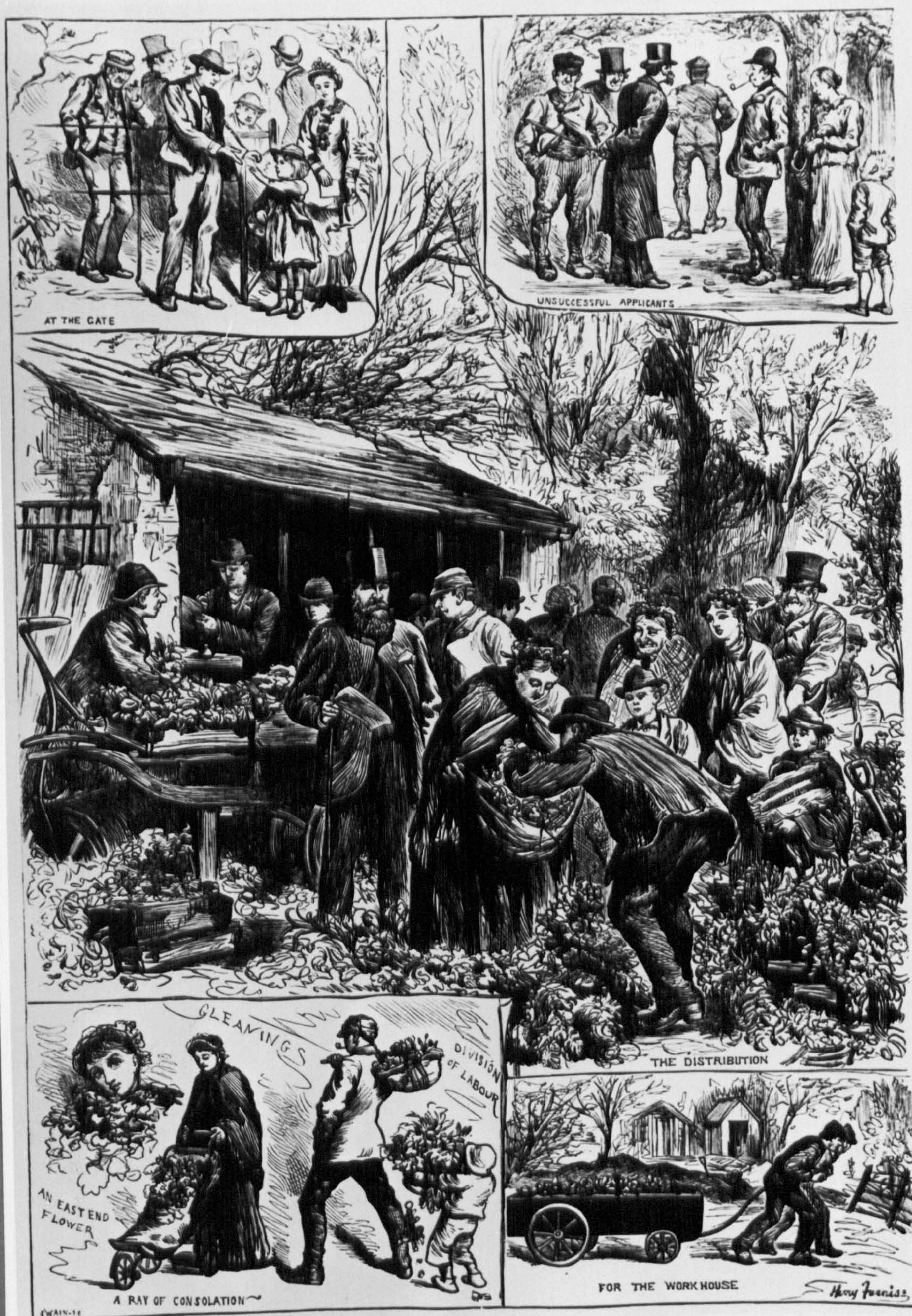


Figure 56 Distribution of plants, Victoria Park, 1891  
(GLC Record Office)



to be made. In the view of Joshua Major, if public parks were sufficiently large, they could accommodate both athletic games and quiet promenades, but only if they were large enough would he include sports facilities:

a spacious promenade ... a great variety of pleasure ground ... a judicious collection of attractive kinds of trees, shrubs and flowers, varied with lawn, arranged in the best possible manner and most attractive style ... When the extent of ground is of sufficient magnitude, room must also be afforded for various athletic games, and for other amusements, as at Manchester.<sup>6</sup>

But, he stressed, great care should be taken that none of the provisions for "innocent athletic games ... recreations, and military exercise.." should interfere with the "composition and beauty of the general landscape".<sup>7</sup> Major thought that unity and harmony should be preserved and made his order of priorities quite clear.

A contemporary theorist of landscape design, C.H.J. Smith, writing at the same time as Major, took a different view about the need to preserve unity and harmony. A city park, he thought, should be more ornate than a country one, because towns were more elaborate than country districts. He then introduced the question of class and taste and argued that because the taste of city park users, particularly that of working people, was not so highly cultivated, the design of the park need not be "so strictly in harmony with the character of the ground, as may be deemed necessary in the secluded retreats of men of much cultivation and refinement".<sup>8</sup> So, according to Smith, public parks should be bright, but not showy, and should feature terraces, statues, monuments and water in the form of fountains, lakes or ponds. There should be separate gymnasias for the youth of both sexes "to give loiterers something to do" and bowling greens for older people, but he did not recommend any facilities for very young children or for active adults.<sup>9</sup>

The question of how much the public should use the grass in the park was the subject of considerable debate between park-keepers and parks committees. For example, the Manchester Public Parks Committee received a report on the grass in Queen's Park that was "left open for the public to play on". The keepers could not see any advantage in throwing open to the public all the grassland at once. Ample grass was thrown open



during the summer months and:

In Whit week all the Green Sward is appropriated for public recreation, but at other times the public are removed from one plot to another alternately and all reasonable facility given for their enjoyment.<sup>10</sup>

The following year, however, the reports on Queen's and Philips Parks showed that the grass was in a poor state "coarse, rank and irregular" from not being rolled and mowed regularly. It was recommended that it should be dressed with white clover and other seeds, that no more manure be applied and that it should be rolled once a fortnight during the winter. In the spring, mowing machines should be used instead of scythes and "the public should be allowed to walk on the Grass, which would be improved by their doing so".<sup>11</sup> In 1857 an application was made to B. Samuelson of Banbury for lawn-mower prices. A 30-inch grass-mowing machine, drawn by pony, cost £11.10.0, less 5% discount, and two of these were ordered in May that year, one for Queen's Park, the other for Philips Park.<sup>12</sup> It was reported the following year that the Budding lawnmowers gave great satisfaction.<sup>13</sup> Even the question of the public walking on the grass was by no means a straightforward one, particularly if the keepers were trying to raise hay and sell it in order to defray the costs of the upkeep of the park. If it were decided that the public should be allowed to use the grass, then the problem was how to keep the growth of the grass down and, at the same time, how it could be used to yield a revenue to the corporation.<sup>14</sup> At Victoria Park and Birkenhead Park the answer was to negotiate grazing leases.

### Sports

Apart from walking on the grass the two other main uses of the open spaces in the parks were for sports and for meetings. The sports catered for in the municipal parks so far discussed were predominantly cricket, archery and quoits. Football was played in Norfolk Park, Sheffield from 1841, when it was opened, and provision for it was made in Major's designs for the Manchester/Salford parks, but there is no record of it ever being formally played in them.

By the time Birkenhead Park was officially opened in 1847, cricket and archery grounds had been established.<sup>15</sup> Ten years later there were three cricket grounds and a quoiting ground<sup>16</sup> but football was not allowed



until 1861.<sup>17</sup> At Victoria Park, cricket grounds dated from 1849. Other games that were established early were archery and trapball, in which a ball was propelled mechanically from a trap and then struck by the players.<sup>19</sup> Football was not allowed until 1888.<sup>20</sup> In the Manchester/Salford parks, despite the fact that Major's designs had included provision for gymnasia, cricket, football and other games, only at Queen's Park was provision made for cricket. In 1849 Queen's Park also featured quoit and skittle alleys, a ball and shuttlecock ground and an archery ground.<sup>21</sup> At Peel Park at the same date there was a skittle alley and archery ground and, by 1860, there were quoit and cricket grounds.<sup>22</sup> At Philips Park in 1849 there were two ball and shuttlecock grounds, a quoit alley and skittle alley, and an archery ground.<sup>23</sup> It would therefore appear that cricket, archery, shuttlecock, quoits and, in Manchester and Salford, skittles, were the sports that were promoted and it was not until later in the century, if at all, that provision was made for football. Football clubs had been established by the 1840s but it was not until 1863 that the Football Association was established and a unified code of play began to be adopted.<sup>24</sup> Before that there were few or no rules, referees, or limits to the size of the teams. The ground could cover the whole of a parish and the goals could be several miles apart.<sup>25</sup>

Other games played on the grass included those associated with local customs. In Manchester, two favourite games were knurr and spell, and the graces. In the graces, two players each had two sticks and two small hoops (Figure 57). The aim was to throw and catch the hoops without allowing them to fall to the ground. They could be thrown and caught by either one or both sticks as the players pleased.<sup>26</sup> Knurr and spell was similar in some ways to trapball. The spell was a spring fastened to an iron back or wooden board. About two inches from the loose end of the spring was a small cup to hold the knurr, which was a small one-inch diameter boxwood ball. The loose end of the spring was held in a toothed rack and when it was released the knurr was hurled upwards (Figure 58). The knurr was hit by the pommel, which was similar to a billiard cue but with a small block of wood at one end. The player making the longest drive was the winner.<sup>27</sup>

As well as games with particular local associations, certain games such



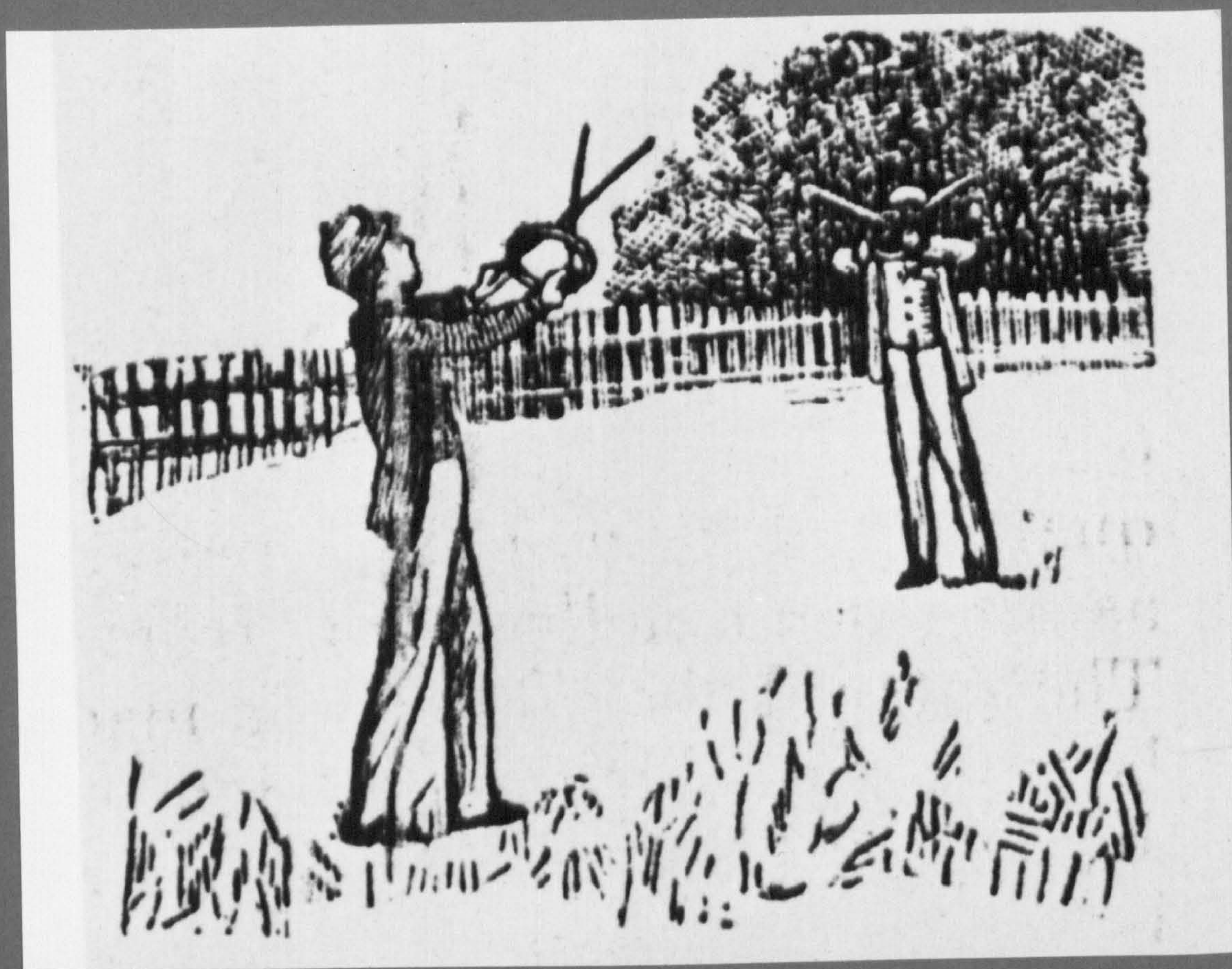


Figure 57 The Graces (Cassell, op.cit. p.281)





Figure 58 Knurr and Spell (Cassell, op.cit. p.280)



as skipping had wide appeal. In the Manchester/Salford parks sites were set aside for the use of skipping ropes, but not all parks were prepared to allow this activity and in Victoria Park those who persisted were liable to be arrested.

Rope-skipping seems to be a forbidden pleasure in Victoria Park ... On Whit-Monday a company of rope-skipppers, having disregarded the notice of the police to desist, one of them was arrested and fined 5/-. His wife, who had interfered with the police by pulling a constable's whiskers, had to pay a penalty of 20/-, or 14 days' imprisonment.<sup>28</sup>

As this quotation shows, skipping was not an activity confined to children.

### Gymnasia and Playgrounds

The Manchester/Salford parks and Victoria Park included both playground equipment and gymnastic apparatus. Boys only were supposed to use the gymnastic apparatus, whereas playground equipment could be used by both boys and girls.<sup>29</sup> But certain apparatus, such as pillars, was available for female exercise.<sup>30</sup> Separate playgrounds were provided for boys and for girls in the Manchester/Salford parks, and the boys were not allowed to intrude on the girls' area. The sketch map of Peel Park in 1848 (Figure 17) showed only one area as a gymnasium but, some fourteen years later, this park featured "two large and well-tended gymnasia" in addition to the cricket, archery and quoit grounds.<sup>31</sup>

No games could be played nor could the gymnastic apparatus be used on Sunday.<sup>32</sup> Some parks carried this even further by closing completely on Sunday mornings. Peel Park, Macclesfield, for example, was closed completely on Sundays from 9.00 a.m. to noon in the 1850s.<sup>33</sup>

### Meetings

The other main use of the open spaces in the parks was for meetings and here again the type of meeting allowed was indicative of particular views concerning the role of the municipal park in the community. The main types of meeting were religious, political, military, and social meetings such as listening to music.

In the regulations proposed for the Manchester parks in 1846, no mention



was made of meetings of any form,<sup>34</sup> but in 1848 there is evidence of Government anxiety concerning the use of parks for political meetings in London. 1848 marked the peak of Chartist activity and the Duke of Wellington, who had been given the military command of London, recommended the enforced closure of all the parks.<sup>35</sup> This was exceptional; most of the records on the use of parks for meetings were concerned with whether they should be sanctioned or not. In Manchester, the use of parks for meetings was not mentioned in the regulations approved by the Council in 1868 (Ref.68, Chapter Four) and it was not until 1897 that bye-laws specifically prohibiting meetings were passed. These bye-laws prohibited meetings for political or religious purposes or performances or demonstrations of any type unless application had been made to the Corporation and permission was granted subject to certain conditions. In April 1897 the Parks and Cemeteries Committee presented a report to the Council of meetings and demonstrations in the parks and recreation grounds to be held under bye-law No. 4. It was agreed that permission for holding meetings or demonstrations be granted for the following parks and recreation grounds: Alexandra Park, Philips Park, Clayton Road Recreation Ground, Gibbon Street Recreation Ground, Queen's Park, Conran Street Recreation Ground, George Street (Openshaw) Recreation Ground, Birch Fields and Boggart Hole Clough. It was also agreed that both or either of the following conditions should be observed:

1. Such person or persons shall not distribute printed or written matter ..
2. Such person or persons shall not solicit or collect money ...

No meetings were to be allowed on Sunday.<sup>36</sup>

The response by various local authorities to the question of meetings varied. In 1866 the Birkenhead Parks Committee decided that they could not sanction religious services in the park<sup>37</sup> and, in 1886, a Birkenhead bye-law prohibited the holding of political or religious demonstrations in the park.<sup>38</sup> However, a local resident, J.R. Kaighin, recalled that in his youth in the 1860s "open air meetings and services of any character" were allowed in the park, and he remembered being present at Temperance and evangelical services on Sunday nights.<sup>39</sup> In Victoria Park, London, all preaching was prohibited in 1856 in order to "prevent the occurrence of the unbecoming scenes which took place in the park last year".<sup>40</sup> Although religious and political meetings were part of urban life, they tended by their nature to be divisive and could be seen as



inappropriate to parks where social harmony was promoted. Some parks, however, built up a reputation as a location for public debate, and Victoria Park:

on Sunday is one of the great revelations and surprises of out-door life ... the attractions are not the beautiful scenery or the fresh air, but those of public discussion and debate.

These meetings, which were held near the fountain, were not:

held to provide amusement ... all are engaged in strenuous controversy on social questions, as seen from the religious, political or economic point of view.<sup>41</sup>

Another use of the open grass in the parks was for drilling Volunteers, particularly in the early 1860s when the fear of invasion by Napoleon III led to the formation of Volunteer Movements in a number of cities. In Birkenhead, Rifle Volunteer Battalion drill was allowed on Saturday afternoons.<sup>42</sup> However, there were problems with the drill continuing until late and the presence of horsemen in the park, so drill was only allowed until half an hour after sunset. Most of the volunteers of the district were reviewed on the large open ground of the upper (western) park. In Victoria Park, the agreements with the Board of Works over grazing did not allow for the exercise of Rifle Volunteers or any military force. Nevertheless, the right was reserved to authorise any military force to drill upon all or any part of the park without compensation or abatement of rent and that right was not restricted to Volunteers. In addition, bands of music were authorised to play without the tenants being entitled to compensation.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from complaints of disturbance due to drilling in the evening, this use of the parks was generally accepted. Drilling provided a form of public spectacle and the volunteers represented a national interest with which, it was generally assumed, all agreed. Hence such exercises were not seen as an inappropriate use of the parks.

### Music

Another main use of the open spaces, apart from their use for sports, was for listening to music. The influence of the Sabbatarians in the



1850s on the question of Sunday music in the parks has already been discussed. On other days of the week the parks provided the stage for brass band performances. In 1861, eleven brass bands marched through the town of Blackburn to the Corporation Park, where they gathered on the upper terrace. The 149 players played from the works of Haydn and Handel, and ended with the Hallelujah chorus and the national anthem. More than 50,000 people gathered in the park to listen to them and to mark the occasion, one of the Russian guns mounted in the park as a trophy was fired.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from the question of whether or not music should be played in the parks, the choice of the type of music to be played was in itself revealing. The choice of Haydn, Mozart and Mendelssohn and the avoidance of dance music illustrated clearly whose tastes were being promoted.

#### The Uses of Water

A sheet of water in the form of a lake contributed to the tranquillity of the area of the park adjacent to it. This tranquillity could still be retained if certain activities associated with water were permitted. Fishing, for example, would not destroy the tranquillity, neither would boating or skating, provided the numbers participating were not too large. But swimming, with the excitement that it engendered, undoubtedly would, as would the shooting of wild duck.

The recreational activity with which Victoria Park was most closely associated from virtually the beginning was bathing. In 1849, John Gibson reported on the muddy and impure state of the lake. Immense numbers bathed in the water, which was "appropriated to the Public at stated hours for that purpose".<sup>45</sup> Gibson had visited the bathing lake at 5.00 a.m. and calculated that an average of 2,400 people immersed themselves in the space of three hours. That number, he thought, was probably nearer 3,000 and that figure would be more than doubled if the facilities were increased. It was not Pennethorne's idea that the eastern lake should be used for bathing, indeed he thought that such use would entirely destroy "the value of the Park as a place of residence" for the bathing costume was not used.<sup>46</sup>

Pennethorne's view was shared by Joshua Major who thought that open



bathing in park lakes was an "indecent practice" and that provision should be made elsewhere.<sup>47</sup> Only males swam and the absence of bath-houses in the district meant that local open waters such as canals, lakes and rivers had to serve instead. This practice had been well established for many years, for witnesses to the SCPW in 1833 reported on the absence of bathing places "to which the humbler classes can resort".<sup>48</sup> Nude bathing was against the law, so people did so "at their own peril, sometimes being taken into custody for it". Bathing in Victoria Park's eastern lake was only allowed at specified times, but:

Persons are seen to undress and plunge into the water before the appointed time, and when the police attempt to take possession of their clothes, as a means of securing their persons, the garments are carried off to a distance by friends - sometimes by women, - and the bather is next seen running about in a state of nudity while other persons availing themselves of the absence of the police, commit the offence of the pursued.<sup>49</sup>

Thus the view that working people were used to dirt and not only did not object to it but would not avail themselves of the means to keep clean even if the facilities were available, was contradicted by the evidence of the avid use made of the lakes at Victoria Park and other local places.

Bathing took place both summer and winter and a request for a shelter for winter bathers was made in 1858. This was not envisaged as an elaborate structure, unlike the design for the accommodation of bathers which had been put forward by H.N. Goulty in 1849 (Figure 59). This axially symmetrical Italianate design was intended to flank the opposite sides of the Serpentine and would be linked by two bridges. The accommodation comprised dressing rooms, boathouses and two areas set aside for the Royal Humane Society who were presumably to go to the assistance of those who found themselves in difficulties. It was not built, neither was the more modest request at Victoria Park. The reason given at Victoria Park was that if the shelter was solely for winter bathers' use, it would have to be locked at other times, otherwise it would become;

the resort of bad characters - unless a constable was constantly on the spot - and as the Park and its benefits are intended for the many, the locking



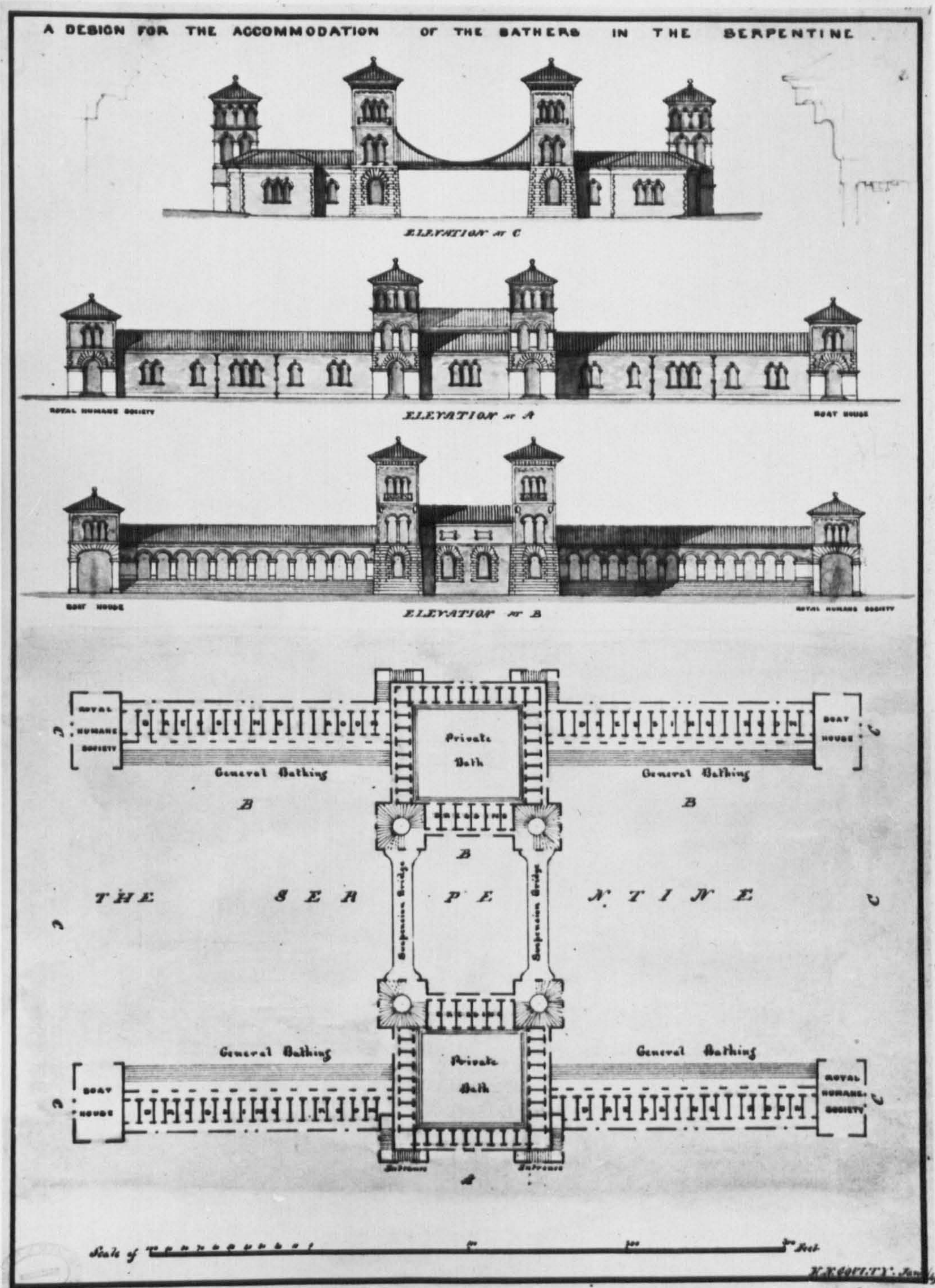


Figure 59 H.N. Goulty. Design for the Accommodation of Bathers in the Serpentine, 1849. (R.I.B.A.)



up would perhaps be considered too exclusive.<sup>50</sup>

and such socially divisive features should be avoided. In 1860 permission was sought to erect a wooden structure by the eastern lakes "for the reception of persons apparently drowned, which as the skating season is approaching, is an important consideration", but this also was not allowed.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from bathing, the lakes were also used for such activities as dog-washing which some regarded, as they did bathing, as a nuisance. In 1873 the western lake of Victoria Park was cleaned and a new concrete wall with granite coping erected around it.

All the unprotected portions of the lake have been furnished with wireguard netting, which amongst other advantages, will prevent dog-washing and swimming, a nuisance which has for several years been considered a great source of annoyance.<sup>52</sup>

While bathing and skating were allowed on the eastern lakes, on the western lake, known as the ornamental lake, only boating was officially allowed.<sup>53</sup> Writing on Victoria Park in 1898, J.G. Sexby noted that of all the recreational facilities of the park "Foremost among these must be placed swimming and bathing, for which the park affords special facilities". By 1898 more than 25,000 had been counted before 8.00 a.m. on a summer morning. The principal bathing lake had a concrete bottom, diving boards and shelters "and all the accessories to make it a perfect out-door swimming bath ... the finest in the world".<sup>54</sup>

In Birkenhead Park, by contrast, no swimming or boating was allowed. "One or two gentlemen" had sought permission to bathe in the lakes in 1846, but their request was refused, and the boathouse/bandstand housed only a boat used to maintain the lake.<sup>55</sup> Skating was allowed at Birkenhead, and Kemp was authorised to provide ropes and poles to help prevent accidents on the lakes.<sup>56</sup> As skating was so popular, Kemp suggested that to make the activity more attractive the ice should be swept after each day's skating and this was agreed.<sup>57</sup> In 1855 angling in the Birkenhead Park lakes was allowed. Annual tickets were 21/- each and tickets for other members of the same family were 10/6d. Only angling was allowed, no fly-fishing, and no fishing was allowed between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. or after 9.00 p.m. In addition, it was restricted to places fixed by the Park Committee.<sup>58</sup> The lakes were stocked with various



waterfowl and in addition attracted wild birds to them.<sup>59</sup> In 1848 the practice of shooting birds in Birkenhead Park in the afternoons was reported, and it was agreed that shooting be allowed in the early mornings only, and only of rabbits.<sup>60</sup> But H.K. Aspinall (who was on the Road Improvement Committee in charge of the management of the park) recalled that the policeman in charge of the park had instructions from the Committee to shoot one or two of the wild ducks that reared their young in the park and "send them to each member of the Committee by turn".<sup>61</sup> This was not, however, a facility that the Committee was prepared to extend to everyone.

The use of the lakes in municipal parks illustrated the conflict between the ideals of tranquil nature, in which the park was seen as a place of retreat, and the ideal of the park as a place of recreation and exercise. It was a conflict that was largely unresolvable and Birkenhead Park and Victoria Park illustrated two very different approaches to it.

#### Museums and Reading Rooms

In those municipal parks that were formed from the parks and gardens surrounding large houses, the use of those buildings for recreational and/or educational purposes had to be decided. This was a problem faced at both Peel Park, Salford and Queen's Park, Manchester. The Scottish landscape gardener, C.H.J. Smith, thought that the role of the house as the central feature of private parks and pleasure grounds should in public parks be taken by a picture gallery or museum of natural history or of antiquities. As an example of the success of such an idea, he cited (in 1852) the example of the museum in Peel Park.<sup>62</sup>

A public meeting to form a free museum and library in Peel Park had been held on 2 July 1849 and at this meeting a committee was formed to collect subscriptions and donations of books and specimens. The library, which contained 7,000 volumes, was opened on 9 January 1850, and a museum of local natural history opened in the following June.<sup>63</sup> Manchester Public Parks Committee would seem to have been slower in this matter than Salford for, in 1855, they recommended reading rooms in Queen's Park and Philips Park, and commended the idea of museums in refreshment houses "but the means of accomplishing them and affording their upkeep



represented great difficulties".<sup>64</sup> The Committee also considered establishing a library in each park, but thought that the location was inappropriate and that a site between the two parks would be more accessible. A museum was opened in Queen's Park early in 1864.<sup>65</sup> On the anniversary of its opening the following year, it was noted that the average attendance during the year had been 764 people/day and the total attendance 239,156. It was open every day except Sundays and Christmas Day and the "importance of imparting popular information has been kept strictly in view".<sup>66</sup> Twenty years later the Council were involved in rebuilding and enlarging this museum.<sup>67</sup>

### Bye-laws

Despite the fact that parks were seen as a means of promoting discipline, a variety of offences were nevertheless committed within their boundaries and the problem of maintaining control over behaviour was confronted from the inception of each park. Bye-laws regulating the use of open space in towns forms an important feature of the management of such spaces for, without them, any nuisance or breach of order would be subject to ordinary criminal law or to civil action for damages. The latter is impracticable and the former is based on the theory of evil intent, which is inappropriate for offences which are often trivial. To check disorderly acts it was necessary to have the means of bringing people before a magistrate on a definite charge and of inflicting a small fine. Bye-laws provided the means for achieving this and various Statutes provided for the making and enforcing of bye-laws. Before those Statutes were enacted, regulations, as opposed to bye-laws, were adopted in order to preserve order in the parks.

Among the early Statutes which made provision for bye-laws were the Recreation Grounds Act 1859<sup>68</sup> and the Public Improvements Act 1860<sup>69</sup>. The Recreation Grounds Act gave the managers of any recreation ground powers to make and enforce bye-laws and regulations for the care of the ground and the government of all persons using it, but did not say that penalties could be imposed. Subsequently, Charity Commissioners approved bye-laws relating to more than one recreation ground under this Act and inserted the provision for maximum penalties of 40/- or 20/- a day, for continuing offences. Without penalties, the bye-laws could be enforced by removing the offender from the ground under the ordinary



law of trespass and by putting into force the laws for preventing a breach of the peace. In the latter case, bye-laws approved by the Charity Commissioners declared "All persons found disturbing the public peace are liable to immediate apprehension without warrant, so that they may be dealt with according to law".<sup>70</sup>

Under the Public Improvements Act 1860, the powers of making bye-laws conferred in Section 3 of the Act were those conferred by Section 34 of the Baths and Washhouses Act 1846.<sup>71</sup> That enabled a borough or parish council or commissioners to make:

such Bye-laws for the management, use, and regulation of the baths and washhouses and of the persons resorting thereto as the Council and Commissioners respectively shall think fit, and they respectively may appoint any penalty not exceeding £5 for any and every breach of any Bye-law made by them respectively.<sup>72</sup>

Local authorities did not necessarily, however, immediately introduce bye-laws, and the park bye-laws, as opposed to regulations, for the Manchester parks were passed in 1868, some twenty years after the parks had been officially opened. The enforcement of park regulations and bye-laws was the duty of the police and of the park-keepers and labourers who were sworn in as special constables. A comparison between the uniforms of the police and those of the park-keepers shows the strong similarities between them and reinforces the role of park-keepers as special constables (Figure 60).

In Birkenhead, the park police were under the control of the Head of the Township force but there were complaints that they did not spend all their time policing the park.<sup>73</sup> This led to a reduction in the numbers of park police to one instead of three, and the swearing-in of park labourers as special constables for Sunday afternoons.<sup>74</sup> The swearing-in of park labourers as special constables was adopted at the Manchester/Salford parks from 1846 and this seems to have been the general solution to the problem of maintaining order in the parks. The crimes reported tended to be of a petty nature, such as picking flowers,<sup>75</sup> bad language, drunkenness by either the visitors or the park-keepers and gardeners,<sup>76</sup> and attempted theft. A police constable reported that he heard a knock and suspected a felony in Queen's Park. He went to the place and



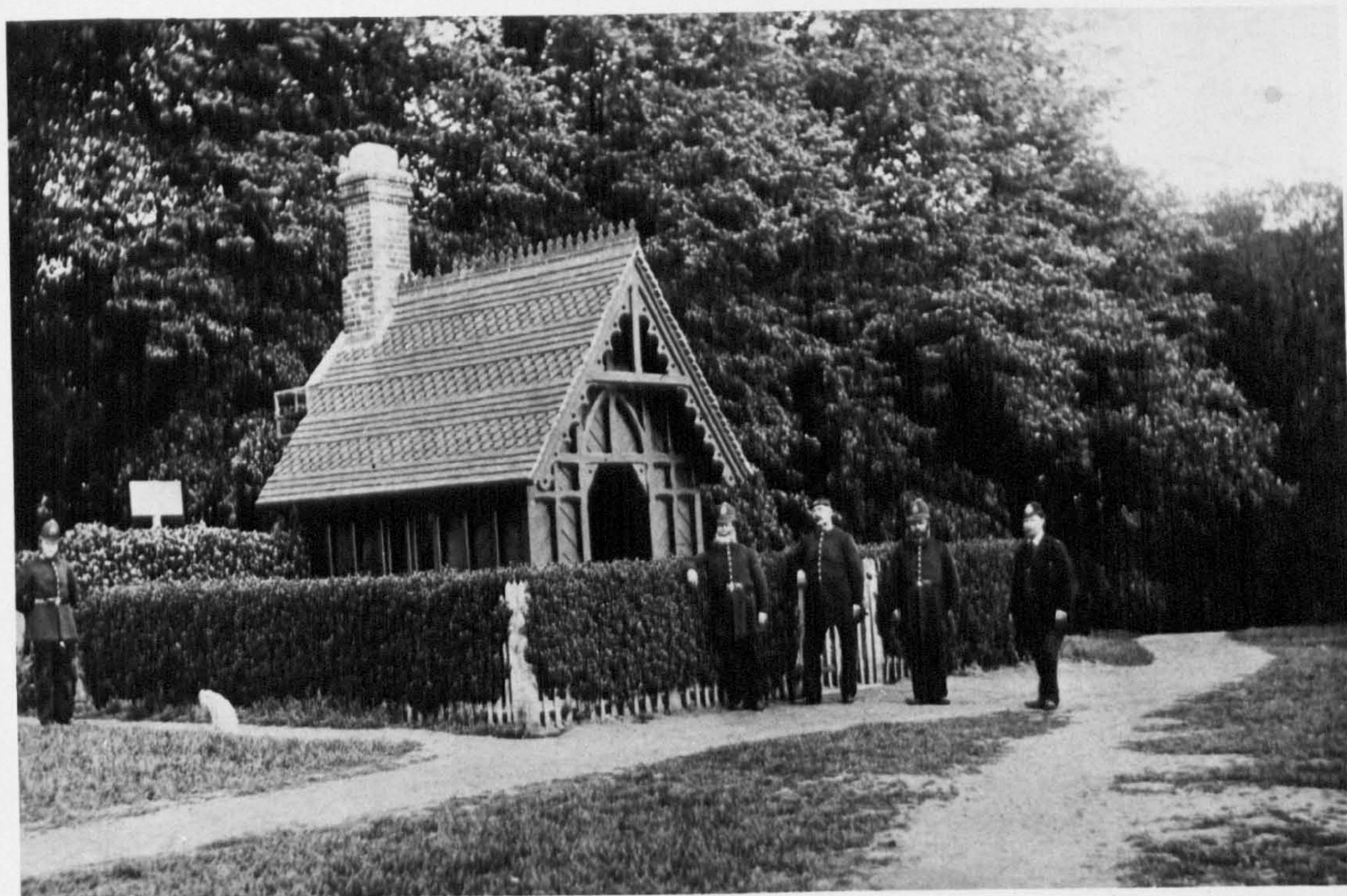


Figure 60 Park-keepers and police, Bostall Woods, c.1890  
(GLC Record Office)



"discovered a man in the act of stealing the brass steps from the pillars used for female exercise". The prisoner hit the constable and the witness with a bar of iron before he was caught.<sup>77</sup>

The dual role of the park-keepers in planting and maintaining the park as well as enforcing order in the parks led to problems, as this example from Manchester indicates. In 1865 Mr Harrison the park-keeper sent in a long report to the Manchester Public Parks Committee on the difficulties he had experienced in maintaining satisfactory control over the conduct of visitors to Philips Park. In fine weather the park was visited by "a number of exceedingly ill behaved young men and women whose dress, language and conduct were both disgusting and filthy". Because of them, claimed Harrison, respectable people were deterred from visiting the park. It was, however, difficult to identify particular individuals who were violating the rules of the park and if he, or the other staff, remonstrated with them, they were greeted with laughs and sneers which they could take no action against "for fear of being complained against in the newspapers and accused either of drunkenness or despotism ...".<sup>78</sup> Harrison thought that there were particular reasons for this reaction to the park staff. The working people of Manchester had contributed to the costs of the parks so they thought they should be privileged to use them as their own private property, and interpreted any restraint on their actions as an act of oppression. This impression had been encouraged by the notice that had been posted in the parks at the time of their opening, which said that "This park was Purchased by the People, was made for the People and is given to the People for their protection". When Harrison or other staff attempted to carry out the regulations of the park:

this placard has been produced and the Park-keeper and his assistants have been told to mind their work, that their masters had entrusted the Park to the People and they were exceeding their duty by interfering with them.<sup>79</sup>

It was in any case, said Harrison, very difficult for the park staff to look after visitors during the day as they were fully employed on work in the park. Moreover, the nature of their work meant that they were generally working close together and as a result large areas of the park were left unsupervised. When the men started their duties as watchers, after working hours, they were not in a fit state "to run after the young fellows who infest the Park and who feel that they can in most cases, if



even detected, evade capture". This was partly because of the age of the men employed. Out of the eight employees, including Harrison, three were aged 59, 61 and 66 respectively and, although another, Thomas Williams, was only 51, he "appeared to be as old and infirm as any of them".<sup>80</sup> The picture conjured up by Harrison's report of elderly and exhausted park workers being taunted and teased by lively young men and women and trying ineffectively to chase them across the park, is very vivid. The real reason behind the saga, however, seems to have been the desire by Harrison to replace his older workers by younger men, but whether he was successful in his plan has not been recorded.

The dual role of park worker and special constable undoubtedly did little to enhance relations with the public and evidence shows that certain park-keepers acquired a reputation for officiousness from an early date. In St James's Park when the children crowded round the enclosure to gain a better view of the ducks "we observe the verdant-coated verderers of the Office of Woods and Forests, cutting away with ratans at poor little nursery girls and their helpless charges ..." Officiousness was combined with insolence and this same source noted:

there is much insolence displayed by the green men who keep the gates, towards decent poor people, who may be desirous of taking a mouthful of fresh air within the enclosure.

Do these fellows recollect that themselves and their masters, the ground they are appointed to protect, and the green coats they wear, are bought, fed, maintained, and paid for by the taxation, direct and indirect, contributed from the sweat of the brow of that very poor fellow, among others, this moment repulsed from the gate ...<sup>81</sup>

The predominant impression from official reports of the use of parks, whether by park-keepers, the police or the Park Committees, was the expectation and anticipation of anti-social behaviour by working people, an expectation that was not dimmed by experience to the contrary. Time and time again reports were made of "very few cases of drunkenness", or of peaceful crowds and the tone of these reports might sometimes be interpreted as one of disappointment, for this seemed to indicate that working people were not behaving in the way they were assumed to do by those making the reports.



## Conclusion

While the layout and to a large extent the details of parks followed the principles established by the major theorists of landscape design, park use varied considerably from town to town. In the course of the development of the parks over a period of years many parks established a reputation for particular activities: in Victoria Park, bathing and open air meetings; in Birkenhead Park, the cricket club. Peel Park, Bradford became the venue for the Great West Riding Galas,<sup>82</sup> while at Corporation Park, Blackburn, as many as eleven brass bands congregated on the terraces to play,<sup>83</sup> and at Avenham Park, Preston, thousands of children gathered each Easter Monday to roll their eggs and oranges down the slopes.<sup>84</sup> Later in the century, Battersea Park, London became noted as the place where the cycling craze developed and beginners could learn to ride.<sup>85</sup> Most of the contemporary documents of parks fail to give details of the pastimes permitted, so it is difficult to generalise. However, it is clear that the active sports that were permitted were predominantly for men. Gymnastic apparatus was provided for females but there was no indication of the ages of the users, and playground equipment was provided for children of both sexes.

It is difficult to obtain a balanced view of the use of municipal parks since individual reactions by the users remain largely unrecorded, and those records that are available tend to concentrate on special events and on anti-social behaviour. Although there is no systematic account of the public use of the parks, it is possible to put together a picture from the fragmentary indications, and parks evidently provided a great deal of innocent pleasure to their users for the vivid floral displays, the grass, the trees, the lakes and islands, all provided such a contrast to the urban environment. The records of park use that have been examined indicate that even such simple activities as the use of the grass by the public was by no means a straightforward matter and a balance was sought between the economics of park maintenance and public access. It is, however, in the areas of sports permitted in the parks, the types of meetings allowed, and even the choice of music played at concerts that the most direct evidence is found of the role of the park in reinforcing middle and ruling class standards. Cricket and archery were favoured but football tended not to be unless it had been established at a particular park since its inception. Football was



played at Norfolk Park, for example, from 1841 when it was opened, while Calthorpe Park, Birmingham, which opened in 1857, had been

maintained for several years as an open field ...  
The greatest part of the ground is, however,  
still kept open and it continues to be, as it  
always has been, a favourite place of resort of  
cricket and football clubs.<sup>86</sup>

Municipal parks were seen as places where the classes could mix, but on middle and ruling class terms, so events which were seen as uncontroversial, such as volunteer drilling, were allowed. Political and religious meetings were seen as divisive and Victoria Park was the exception in allowing these. The educational function of parks was evident in the labelling of plants and trees and in the location of museums in certain parks. In the area of the facilities available in the park for women, the way in which the role of the park was differentiated in terms not only of class but also of sex mirrored that of society as a whole. There was a general lack of activities available to women, other than walking and sitting and only for children were there gymnasias available to both sexes.

This evidence of the permitted pastimes leads on to the question of whether working people did use the parks to any great extent. Contemporary illustrations rarely showed their presence, the facilities available were not of their choosing, and no sports or games were allowed on Sundays when they would have had an opportunity of using them. Unless the park was close to the areas in which they lived, visiting it demanded an effort. Certainly when there were special events, such as concerts, police reports indicated their presence, and large numbers swam at Victoria Park, but it is impossible to gain any real evidence as to how much the parks were in fact used by those they were intended for and how much they were "gentility-mongering places".<sup>87</sup> That they were so seen is indicated by the bye-laws of the Manchester and the Salford parks.<sup>88</sup> These enabled the park-keepers to exclude people who were not clean, or dressed in clean and decent clothes, and this would appear to indicate that in the parks distinctions were made between working people and others on the basis of their appearance.



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### SECTION III

In this section the chronological investigation of park development is resumed. The success of towns in establishing parks is recorded in Appendix IV. These developments are examined in order to see how they relate to the effects of legislation and to other factors.

Chapter Nine focuses on the period 1845 to 1865 and the following chapter will examine the main influences on park development in the period 1865 to circa 1880. It is in this latter period that significant changes occur in park design and in the buildings associated with the parks. In Chapter Ten these changes will be examined in the context of the Liverpool and other parks and the social and political role of conservatories, bandstands, carpet-bedding and commemorative floral displays will be evaluated.

In the late 1870s, new directions in park development became evident with an increasing emphasis on small parks and recreation grounds. The reasons for their development and their implications for town planning will be analysed in Chapter Eleven. Some of the factors which subsequently affected the relationship between parks and town planning such as the development of the Garden City Movement fall outside the chronological limits of this study and only brief reference can be made to them.

In conclusion in Chapter Twelve the significance of the development of the municipal park will be assessed in terms of the potential benefits identified by the SCPW in 1833, that is, its physical, social, moral and political benefits, and in terms of its contribution to town planning.



## CHAPTER NINE

### DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT, 1845-1865

Contemporary commentators had clearly identified the growth of the park movement by 1845.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent development of municipal parks summarised in Appendix IV was the result of many complex factors, but the one factor common to them all was the legislation governing what local authorities were allowed to do. A summary of this legislation is presented in Appendix VII and the relationship between it and park development in the period 1845-1865 will now be examined. In addition, wider economic and social factors such as the cotton famine in the North, and the work of the Commons Preservation Society contributed to park development and to the climate of opinion. The main changes that occurred in this period in park design and facilities will be identified and compared with those of the parks established in the 1840s: the Manchester/Salford Parks and Birkenhead Park.

The first important legislation to encourage the acquisition and maintenance of parks by local authorities was in the provisions of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Act 1848.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the Towns Improvement Clauses Act was passed that local authorities could buy or rent land specifically for use for recreation without having recourse to a local Act, which was a lengthy and costly process. The Towns Improvement Clauses Act consolidated in one Act certain provisions usually contained in local Acts for draining, cleansing, lighting, paving, and improving towns.<sup>3</sup> One of its clauses related to open space.

The Commissioners may by a special order as herein defined, but not otherwise, purchase, rent or otherwise provide lands, grounds or other places, either within the limits of the special Act or at a reasonable distance therefrom, not exceeding three miles from the centre of the principal market if any, or from the principal office of the Commissioners in a situation approved of by the Inspector, to be used as a pleasure ground or place of public resort or recreation and the committee may from time to time level, drain, plant, and otherwise layout and improve any such public lands or grounds for the more convenient use and enjoyment thereof.<sup>4</sup>



Furthermore, under this Act local authorities could apply to Parliament for an Act to carry out such works if sufficient powers were not already vested in them, or if the money available was insufficient and they could charge the expenses of the application to the rates. The Towns Improvement Clauses Act thus simplified the procedure for a local authority to acquire parks, lay them out, and maintain them. But if the local authority had been given a park they were not empowered under this Act to maintain it out of public funds. This anomaly was rectified the following year when the Public Health Act 1848 gave the Local Boards of Health powers to:

provide, maintain, lay out, plant, and improve  
Premises for the Purpose of being used as public  
Walks or Pleasure Grounds, and support or  
contribute towards any Premises provided for such  
purposes by any person whomsoever.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this Act, the problem of the maintenance of gifts such as Derby Arboretum was overcome.

The Public Health Act was an adoptive Act, the powers of which could be used by local authorities if they so wished but there was no compulsion upon them to do so. Indeed, Leeds, Birmingham, and many of the larger towns refused to adopt it and instead obtained their own local Improvement Acts. From the late 1840s onwards Parliament tended to pass general adoptive Acts, whereas before that the initiative for legislation to control the urban environment had come mainly from local Acts passed by the larger towns. Adoptive Acts simplified and cheapened the legislative procedure, but individual towns were still expected to identify what legislation they needed and what costs were involved. If in their opinion the general legislation did not suit particular local problems, they could and did draft local Bills, particularly if the general Act carried with it some form of supervision by central government, as was the case with the Public Health Act.<sup>6</sup>

Appendix IV shows that there was a slow development of municipal parks until the mid-1850s and that a sudden increase in activity occurred in 1856 and 1857. However, this increased activity was not necessarily due to the legislation. Other factors, such as the increased concern with working class recreation as a result of the Ten Hour Act 1847 and the Saturday Half-Holiday Movement, were influential although it is difficult



to distinguish their specific contribution. In addition the land for certain parks such as Wavertree Park, Liverpool was acquired before this legislation was enacted. The gifts of parks that occurred in the period preceding 1859 also cannot be attributed to the effects of this legislation for neither Act had any direct bearing on the problem of gifts of land for parks.

In 1859 the Recreation Grounds Act,<sup>7</sup> a public general Act, was introduced by R.A. Slaney, the chairman of the Select Committee on Public Walks. This Act encouraged the donation of money or land to municipal authorities by relaxing the rules of law which had restricted municipal corporations from holding land. Its main clauses referred to the conveyancing of land to Trustees to be held by them as public recreation grounds<sup>8</sup> and to the granting of land held by municipal corporations to the same use.<sup>9</sup> Under this Act land or personal property not exceeding £1000 could be bequeathed for the purpose of providing public recreation grounds or playgrounds,<sup>10</sup> but the Act did not define those terms or differentiate between them and parks. Bye-laws could also be made under this Act, but they could be enforced only by indictment which was a cumbersome procedure. The Recreation Grounds Act stressed the need to locate such sites near to the populations who were to use them, and it was intended to promote the development of small open spaces in urban areas. At the time that Slaney was presenting his Bill in Parliament, The Builder identified the need for parks thus: "What seems ... to be wanted ... are little plots of ground for public playgrounds, at convenient intervals, in the midst of our densest populations".<sup>11</sup>

The problem with existing municipal parks was that they were too far from the homes of working people. Although the aim had been to provide areas of recreation for all classes, but particularly the working classes, the building of a park tended to increase the value of the surrounding land (See Chapter Five). Where this occurred those areas became in effect extensions of middle and upper class areas. The new recreation grounds would be located in or near working class districts and so be more accessible.

To expect mothers to carry their children one or more miles from their own homes for the purpose of play, or to suppose that boys and young men are likely after a hard day's work, to undertake



a fatiguing walk to a place of recreation, when the time consumed in the walk should have been devoted to the game, is simply absurd. They will not do it. If the children and youth of the working classes are to have recreation, suitable places must be provided near at hand. To facilitate the procuring of such places two Acts of Parliament have recently been passed ... that Manchester may take advantage of them is sincerely to be hoped for by everyone ...<sup>12</sup>

An examination of Appendix IV shows that only a few small open spaces of under two acres has so far been identified in the period between the passing of the Act and 1880 and that the term recreation ground was applied not only to such small spaces as the two-acre Darbshire Recreation Ground but also to the eighteen-acre Bank Lodge Recreation Ground in Leeds, both of which opened in 1869. It was not until the 1880s that more effective action regarding small open spaces situated in working class districts occurred (See Chapter Eleven). Where this Act was successful was in stimulating gifts of parks. Between 1845 and 1859 two gifts of parks have been identified, but the number of parks donated between 1860 and 1875 so far identified (including part-gifts) was seventeen, a substantial increase. Between 1876 and 1885 twelve gifts of parks have been identified, and the rate of donations was similar to that in the preceding decade and a half.

The second Act referred to in the above quotation was the Public Improvements Act 1860. This Act enabled local authorities to acquire, hold and manage open spaces at the expense of the rates. It was an adoptive Act and under it ratepayers could purchase or lease land and accept gifts and grants of land for the purpose of forming public walks, parks and playgrounds. They could furthermore levy rates for maintaining them, removing any nuisances or obstructions to their free use and enjoyment, improving walks and footpaths, and for providing convenient seats and shelters.<sup>13</sup> The limit placed on the rate to be used for these purposes was 6d. in the £.<sup>14</sup> However, before any such rate could be levied the Act stipulated that a sum not less than half the estimated cost of the improvement had to be raised. This sum could be raised by private subscription, via donations, or other means, but local authorities could not borrow money in order to carry out the purposes of the Act.<sup>15</sup>



Appendix IV shows that there was a substantial increase in activity concerning the development of parks after 1860 in comparison with the period 1845-1859, and in the period post-1875 there was another substantial increase.

Table 2

<u>Local authority activity in park development</u>			
Period:	1845-1859	1860-1874	1875-1885
Number of parks opened	26	47	82

These figures indicate that local authority activity accelerated in the period 1845-1885 but they should not be taken as accurate figures of all local authority activity.

Another Act passed in the early 1860s was also of relevance, although it related specifically to enclosed gardens and ornamental grounds in towns, and thus to semi-public open space. The Town Gardens Protection Act 1863 ensured that where such spaces had fallen into neglect, they should be protected by the corporate bodies of the town.<sup>16</sup> If the owners or occupiers of the houses which had the benefit of these spaces did not agree to take charge of them, then protection could be vested in the local authority. This Act therefore introduced the concept of intervention by local authorities in the maintenance of such semi-public open spaces. The Act was however of very limited operation and in 1881 detailed provision was made in the Open Spaces Act for the transfer of such gardens to the local authority by the persons responsible for their upkeep.<sup>17</sup>

It was these Acts that provided the legislative framework within which municipal parks developed and it was not until the passing of the Public Health Act 1875<sup>18</sup> that any substantial alterations occurred. Nevertheless, the system of local Acts continued alongside this legislation and local authorities continued to decide on what type of legislation to adopt according to the particular situation.

The question of cause and effect in Parliamentary legislation is a complex one. It can be argued that it was not until the climate of opinion changed and the pressure became strong enough that there was successful action in Parliament regarding legislation to promote parks.



The SCPW Report of 1833 was evidence of the first official interest in the topic, thereafter there were two periods, separated by approximately a decade in which further legislation regarding parks was enacted. The legislation passed in 1847, 1848 and in 1859 and 1860 could therefore be seen as a response to this pressure as well as itself providing a stimulus to park development, and it is not possible to separate the two. It is, however, possible to identify the importance of one particular individual, R.A. Slaney, who first of all drew the attention of Parliament to the problem of the lack of open space for recreation in 1833 and then some twenty-five years later introduced the Recreation Grounds Act.

### The Cotton Famine

Certain events and the legislation directly associated with them can be seen to have acted as a direct stimulus to park development and the cotton famine provides an example of such a stimulus. In 1864 The Builder noted "The park movement ... is on the increase": Sunderland and Bolton were adding to their existing parks, Oldham had purchased sixty-five acres within a mile of the town hall, and there was activity in Everton, Hulme, Lancaster and Blackburn.<sup>19</sup> Much of this activity identified by The Builder was a direct result of the cotton famine.

Lancashire depended on America for 80% of her raw cotton and over 1,000 million pounds of raw cotton were imported annually. In 1861, as a result of the American Civil War, the southern ports of America were under blockade and cotton imports to Britain plummeted. Initially the effect of this drop in imports was to increase the price of manufactured cotton goods and hence it was to the manufacturers' benefit as they were able to sell off stocks. But the effect on the people working in the industry was that unemployment rose rapidly. In Preston in 1864 there were 76 cotton mills which had formerly employed 25,000 people, who were all put out of work. In Blackburn out of 74 mills, 30 were closed, 18 running full time, 16 short time, and 15,000 people were out of work. In Oldham where there was a variety of industry, 5,000 people were unemployed. In all, it was estimated that some half-million were unemployed as a direct result of the cotton famine.<sup>20</sup>

Various actions were undertaken to provide relief to the areas most affected, among them the passing of the Union Relief Aid Act 1862,<sup>21</sup>



the Union Relief Aid Acts Continuance 1863,<sup>22</sup> and the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act 1863.<sup>23</sup> Under this latter Act, local authorities in certain manufacturing districts could borrow money in order to improve or provide drains, sewers, roads, waterworks, parks, recreation grounds and cemeteries. It was under this Act that the cotton famine had a direct effect on the development of municipal parks.

An estimate presented to the office of the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act indicated how a sum of £1.5 million would be apportioned and what proportion might be spent on parks and recreation grounds.<sup>24</sup>

Table 3

Estimated Expenditure of £1.5 million on Public Works					
Description of Works	Materials etc.	Skilled Labour	Unskilled Labour	Plant and Superintendence	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Main sewers	191,760	67,280	105,760	35,200	400,000
House drains	72,000	25,230	39,660	13,110	150,000
Streets paved with square sets	204,675	12,800	20,500	12,025	250,000
Ditto with boulders	153,320	12,500	20,800	13,380	200,000
Waterworks, reservoirs, etc.	12,390	10,680	21,370	5,560	50,000
Suburban roads	30,000	15,000	100,000	5,000	150,000
Parks and recreation grounds	10,000	20,000	66,666	3,334	100,000
Enclosing waste land	1,000	500	8,000	500	10,000
Cleansing rivers	3,500	5,500	10,000	1,000	20,000
Land drainage	20,000	6,000	30,000	4,000	60,000
Baring rock	nil	nil	9,000	1,000	10,000
	698,645	175,490	431,756	94,109	1,400,000
Add for land for parks and recreation grounds					100,000
					1,500,000

Four towns borrowed money to undertake work on parks under the terms of the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act:

Bolton	£1,000
Blackburn	£1,350
Oldham	£18,000
	£5,700
Preston	£3,000 <sup>25</sup>



Although the loans for park development under the terms of the 1863 Act were small in comparison to the sums lent for such improvements as sewerage and roads, they nevertheless made important contributions to parks in those particular towns.<sup>26</sup> The sum of £18,000 borrowed by Oldham was used to buy the sixty-five acre site for Alexandra Park.<sup>27</sup> Heywood Recreation Ground, Bolton was laid out by unemployed cotton workers,<sup>28</sup> while at Blackburn they improved the scarped slope of the hill in Corporation Park and constructed a carriage drive to the top of the hill.<sup>29</sup> In Preston, 629 unemployed cotton workers were employed under the terms of the Union Aid Relief Act and, between 1862-5, work was undertaken on levelling and road making in three Preston parks, Avenham, Miller, and Moor Parks.<sup>30</sup> Edward Milner had been asked by the Council to make a report on these parks and this was submitted in February 1864.<sup>31</sup> The parks were laid out according to his designs.<sup>32</sup>

The depressed state of the cotton industry led one Henry Roberts<sup>33</sup> to publish his ideas for employing men from the cotton industry to construct a Proposed People's Palace and Gardens for the Northern and Midland Counties. Such a scheme he thought would not only help to solve the problem of unemployment but would also reduce the need for emigration. The example of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham had shown what an attraction a combined People's Palace and gardens could be. The population of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire numbered more than six millions and formed one third of the population of England and Wales and yet, apart from the Salford Exhibition and Museum, "no exhibition of works of art is open". Moreover, in such a development:

Numbers of factory operatives who are suffering from compulsory idleness, or such mockery of employment as oakum picking, would be pecuniarily and physically benefited (sic) by remunerative employment in the formation of the Gardens, approaches, etc.<sup>34</sup>

Even though the cotton famine was likely to be temporary, the benefits of such a project would last for generations. His idea did not, however, receive the backing it required.

The effect of the cotton famine on the development of the municipal park was to promote improvements to sites that had already been acquired, and to act as a stimulus, in the case of Oldham, to acquire a



site for a new park. It cannot therefore be claimed that this proved a major stimulus to general park development but its effects were of some local importance, particularly in Oldham and Preston.

Manchester was among the towns that applied for loans under the terms of the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act for improvements to the water supply (£130,000) and for cemeteries (£25,000) but not for parks. She did, however, establish a new park in this period. In 1865 Manchester City Council decided to establish a park on the south-west side of the city which had no open spaces. The Council considered various sites, but it is difficult to determine the particular factors which finally made them decide to buy sixty acres on Moss Side from Lord Egerton for £24,000. Alexandra Park was laid out and opened in 1868.<sup>35</sup> In that year Ardwick Green, which had been in the care of a voluntary committee, was taken over by the Council as a public park, and the Council also decided to provide more open spaces or squares in the working class district of New Cross Ward near the centre of the city.<sup>36</sup> These actions were the first taken by the Council to provide open spaces for recreation, for the parks of the 1840s were not established on the initiative of that body. The Corporation took over the administration and maintenance of the parks after they had been acquired and laid out. The timing of these actions in Manchester indicated that by the mid-1860s a renewed concern for the development of parks in Manchester was discernible, and the need to provide small local open spaces for recreation was recognised and clearly stated.

As a result of the cotton famine, specific legislation was enacted which led to action regarding municipal parks in particular towns associated with the cotton industry. Cause and effect in this example can be clearly distinguished, whereas the causes and effects of the more general legislation could not. The setting up of the Commons Preservation Society (CPS) provides a further example of a change in the climate of opinion and of the difficulty in differentiating between causes and effects.

#### The Commons Preservation Society

While the problems associated with the cotton famine were occupying the attention of the north-west of England, in London attention was directed in 1864 towards the question of the enclosures of commons. The 1836



Enclosure Act had provided that common fields within a certain distance of large towns should not be enclosed, and the 1845 General Enclosure Act had enshrined the concept that enclosure was the concern of all local inhabitants. Nevertheless, between 1845 and 1869, 614,800 acres of common land were enclosed, out of which 4,000 acres were set aside for public purposes; 1,742 for recreation grounds and 2,220 for allotments, i.e. 1 in 154 acres, compared with 1 in 186 between 1837 and 1841. It appeared that the effects of the 1845 Act were more detrimental than the previous practice of enclosure under private Acts (as indeed the figures cited above confirm), and that the Commission saw its role as that of expediting enclosure whether it was in the public interest or not.<sup>37</sup>

It was the subject of the London commons which in effect reawakened public opinion nationally to the whole question of commons enclosure, in contrast to previous local, fragmented concern. Earl Spencer, Lord of the Manor of Wimbledon proposed to sell one third of the area of the common, buy up and extinguish the commoners' rights, and fence, drain, and improve the remaining 680 acres. The public park so created would be vested in Trustees, one of whom would be the Lord of the Manor. The Trustees would make bye-laws to manage and regulate the park and the Lord of the Manor would erect a residence for himself in the centre of it. A private Bill was put before Parliament in 1864 to enable the above proposals to be achieved. Not unnaturally, the commoners did not want to be bought out, nor did they want the area of common reduced, and those who lived in adjacent areas objected most strongly to the sale of that part of the common nearest to them. One result was the foundation of the Commons Preservation Society under the Chairmanship of J. Shaw Lefevre, later Lord Eversley, in 1865.<sup>38</sup>

The work of the Society initially was directed towards the preservation of commons and open spaces in London. Its main aim was first to repeal the Statute of Merton under which enclosures were being made; this, however, was refused by Parliament and was not achieved until 1894.<sup>39</sup> The second aim was to place all commons in England and Wales under the protection of a Scheme of Regulation, to maintain order, prevent nuisances, improve, and preserve them in the public interest of health and recreation. Under the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866<sup>40</sup> the complete regulation of commons within fifteen miles of the centre of London was covered and the



Commons Acts of 1876<sup>41</sup> and 1899<sup>42</sup> extended these provisions outside the metropolitan area. However, the power of the Lords of the Manor and of one third of the commoners to veto the proceedings any time before the final approval of the scheme by the Board of Agriculture, limited the effectiveness of these Acts.

From the point of view of the development of municipal parks, the work of the CPS was an important stimulus to public awareness of the need to preserve open space for recreation. The CPS scrutinised public, government, railway and private Bills in order to preserve public interest in commons, and worked to preserve commons from enclosure through Parliament, the Law Courts, public departments, local authorities and the press. The CPS was careful to observe the rights of private property in its work in addition to supporting commoners' rights.<sup>43</sup> It nevertheless received support from socialists and the labour movement, such as donations from the Land Nationalisation Society, the Cleveland Miners' Association, and Barrow and District Trades and Labour Council, and William Morris was a member of the Committee from 1880-87.<sup>44</sup> The Clarion praised its "important work" in preserving commons.<sup>45</sup> For certain socialists the preservation of commons could be seen as a step in the direction of nationalisation of land, whilst the struggle to preserve them kept the principle of public rights to land in the public eye. Others reacted to the threat to popular amenities and the general plight of the urban working class.

The main importance of the CPS to the park movement lay in its close relationships with other societies who were also concerned with the provision of open spaces (see Chapter Ten) and in the publicity engendered by CPS actions, which brought the problem of open spaces for recreation regularly to the attention of the public. In this process the Society itself benefitted, for without the influence of public opinion, it would have been unable to pursue its actions effectively.<sup>46</sup>

### Park Design and Facilities

The parks developed in this period varied in size from under an acre to well over a hundred acres and they were located on very different terrains. An examination of the design and facilities of a few of them can do no more than provide an indication of any major changes or trends.



In 1854 a grant of £750 was made from the government fund to Sunderland, and a Mr Lawson, gardener to Lord Londonderry, and Joseph Smith who had worked at Chatsworth, levelled the ground and laid out the walks. The site of the People's Park was formerly a quarry for building stone and it was officially opened to the public as a park in 1857. In 1866 an extension to the People's Park on the other side of the North Eastern Railway was opened as Mobray Extension Park and the name of the People's Park altered to Mobray Park. The site of the Extension Park had belonged to the Mobray family before it became railway property (Figure 61).

Although the People's Park opened officially in 1857, in 1855 the Gardeners' Chronicle carried several interesting and <sup>some</sup> rather abusive letters on the state of the park at that date. In one view it was at that time "unsurpassed by any place of the kind in England" with a choice collection of forest and ornamental trees, artistically formed mounds, a secluded atmosphere yet providing ample space for exercise.<sup>47</sup> Yet in another view, it could not qualify for the term park since it did not even boast a carriage drive, nor could it be termed a garden, for in June it contained but one bed of dahlias. It was an old quarry "laid out without taste or judgement", with beds of "nondescript outline" formed here and there. Although these beds were similar in size to those generally occupied with bedding plants, in this park they were planted with poplars one or two feet apart.<sup>48</sup> But this view was countered by yet another, which stated that the government inspector had approved of all that had been done in the park, and reminded the critics that parks could not be perfected in one season, unlike market or kitchen gardens. It would appear that the latter was these critics' "legitimate sphere" for they would be more at home there and better able to criticise them than a piece of landscape gardening.<sup>49</sup>

It is not possible to judge which view was the correct one for the earliest plan of the park so far identified (Figure 61) shows the park some forty years later, but it would appear from this that, in comparison with the People's Park, Halifax (Figure 22), which was opened in the same year, Sunderland's park lacked clarity of layout. Statues and a shelter are indicated on Figure 61 but there appears to be no evidence of any playground, gymnasium or sports facilities. At the People's Park, Halifax there were also no facilities for sports or games, indeed they were specifically banned by the donor, but the lack of such facilities was not



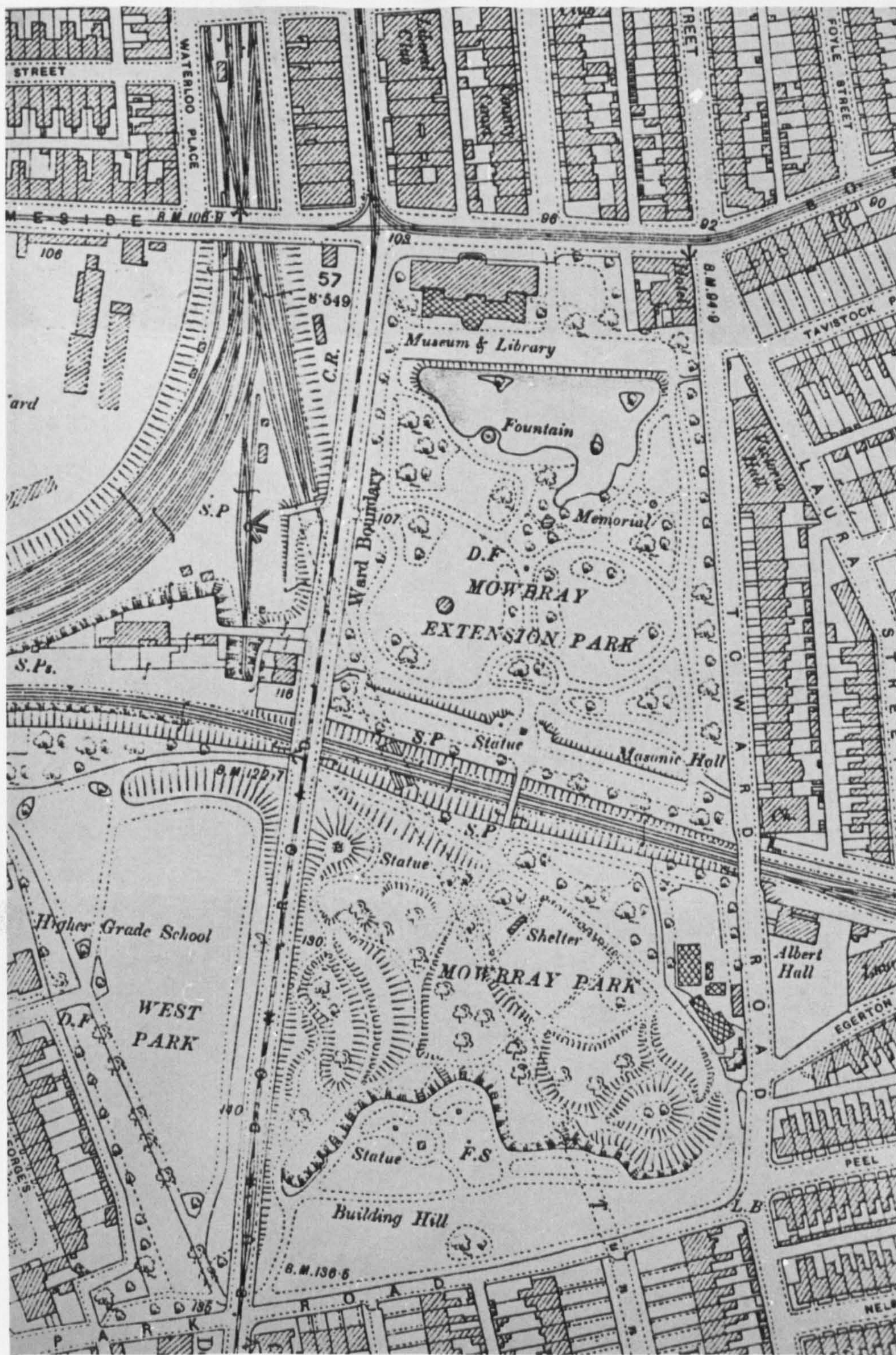


Figure 61 Mowbray Park (formerly People's Park) and Extension Park, Sunderland O.S. 1895







general. Heywood Recreation Ground, Bolton, for example, was a nine-acre site on the south of the town "in immediate proximity ... with a vast population". This was laid out in 1866 in two portions, separated by a central walk and surrounded by a promenade with shrubberies and flower borders. One part consisted of a bowling green, and the other of a raised terrace with intersecting walks and flower beds, while the larger portion was for cricket grounds, gymnasia and "other facilities for public enjoyment".<sup>50</sup> It combined elements of contact with nature, with the provision of facilities for active sports on the nine-acre site, so its facilities did not indicate any clear distinction between the term recreation ground and park. Its size also was not an indication of any particular differences and it would therefore appear that in the 1860s the use of these terms was largely interchangeable.

Edward Milner's design of Moor Park, Preston (Figure 62) shows clearly that the main central area of the park was open grassland in which space was allocated for cricket. Near the southern boundary of the park space was set aside for bowls and for swings, but there is no indication of other playgrounds or a gymnasium. In locating the bowling green and swings near the periphery of the park and leaving the central area open, Milner seems to have been closer to Major's ideas on park design in the Manchester/Salford parks than to Paxton's ideas at Birkenhead, for Paxton did not include such facilities in his design. The layout of the paths at Moor Park and the outlines of the areas planted with trees are informal, like the earlier parks. In addition, there appears to be no large scale buildings in the park. The few buildings that are there, the lodges at the north, east and west entrances and the chalet near the lake (not shown on Figure 62) were small in scale.<sup>51</sup> Another point to note is that there were only a few flower beds in the north-west corner of the park.

Other parks developed in this period showed stronger formal elements in both their design and architecture. The People's Park, Halifax (Figure 22) featured a long terrace along its western boundary (Figure 23). The fountain in the centre of the park provided the focus for paths across it and a certain axial symmetry can be seen to result from them. The introduction of a formal element such as a terrace into the municipal park relates to the introduction of the Italian garden to England from circa



1820.. The features of these Italian gardens included terraces, balustrades, vases and statues, and flights of steps. It was, however, not until after circa 1865 that such features became somewhat more widely used in municipal parks.

As has been stated earlier, it is difficult to try to summarise park design; however, it would appear that the period 1845-65 was not marked by any major changes. In the main, informality remained the key to the design of most parks, and the scale of the buildings associated with them was small and in keeping with this. While efforts were made to provide bright displays of flowers with the use of bedding plants, this was not greatly emphasised in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>52</sup>

From the point of view of the facilities provided for sports and recreation, it is again difficult to generalise. Certain parks offered no sports or play facilities, but sports and play facilities were evident in Milner's design for Moor Park although the range of activities was not so wide as those envisaged by Major for the Manchester/Salford parks.

### Conclusion

The chronology of park development between 1845 and circa 1865 suggests that there was a direct relationship of cause and effect between the legislation enacted and the activity of towns in developing parks. There was certainly an increase in activity after the 1859 and 1860 Acts were passed and the effectiveness of the former Act in stimulating the role of the benefactor was apparent. Because the Public Improvements Act stipulated that half the estimated cost of acquiring and maintaining land for parks had to be raised by other means before a rate could be raised, it too tended to encourage the role of the benefactor. As can be seen from Appendix IV, the number of gifts of parks increased substantially in the period after 1860 and this increase of activity was sustained through the 1860s and 1870s until circa 1885. It would, however, be unwise to ascribe too direct a relationship between park development and the legislation for this would ignore the social and political factors that have already been distinguished. It is only when specific legislation was directed at a particular problem, such as that enacted to relieve the effects of the cotton famine, that this



relationship was a direct one. The work of Parliament is in any case to a large degree a question of response to a climate of opinion. In London in the mid-1860s attention was drawn to the problem of the enclosure of the London commons, and the work of the Commons Preservation Society formed part of the climate of opinion in which parks were developed in the late 1860s and 1870s.

The 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act had indicated that parks should be located within three miles of the principal market. Twelve years later the Recreation Grounds Act stressed the need for parks to be developed near to "populous places" because the parks that had been developed in the intervening period had not solved the problem effectively. Building a park could increase the value of the surrounding land (see Chapter Five) and as a result those areas tended to become extensions of middle and upper class residential areas. It could therefore be argued that the development of parks was promoting the growth of suburbs and that the Recreation Grounds Act in effect recognised this.

Park design in the period 1845-65 showed no major changes from those established in the Manchester/Salford and Birkenhead Parks in the mid-1840s. Informal layout and planting together with small scale buildings were in keeping with picturesque principles. Although certain parks introduced formal elements such as terraces these cannot be said to be a major feature of this period. Similarly, the facilities for sports and recreation provided in the parks did not change greatly. Parks such as Moor Park, Preston 1864 provided facilities for swings, bowls and cricket and, although the range of activities was not so wide as those intended by Major for the Manchester/Salford parks, nevertheless certain active sports were still being encouraged at that date.



## Notes and References

- 1 Christian Reformer, op.cit. p.77
- 2 11 & 12 Vict. c.63
- 3 During the 1830s and 1840s it had become increasingly recognised that the expensive procedure of obtaining local Acts led to : great duplication for the legislative requirements of towns were in reality very similar. The practice of taking over clauses, in their entirety, from the local Acts of other towns spread, as this eased the financial burden. The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 formalised this practice. For further details see Clifford, F. A History of Private Bill Legislation, Vols. 1 & 2, London, 1887
- 4 10 & 11 Vict. c.34, s.135, p.161
- 5 Ibid. s.74
- 6 The average number of local Acts per year in the period 1835-50 was 155, and in the period 1850-65 the average was 230 per year. Clifford, op.cit. Vol. 1, Appendix A
- 7 22 Vict. c.27
- 8 Ibid. s.1
- 9 Ibid. s.4
- 10 Ibid. s.7
- 11 "The struggling classes: public playgrounds", The Builder, Vol. 16, No. 800, 5 June 1858, p.385
- 12 Marriott, W.T. "On the Necessity of Open Spaces in Large Towns" Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association Report, 13 December 1861. Quoted in Jackson, W.G. An Historical Study of the Provision of Facilities for Play and Recreation in Manchester, M.Ed. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1940, p.52
- 13 23 & 24 Vict. c.30, s.1
- 14 Ibid. s.7
- 15 Ibid. s.6
- 16 26 & 27 Vict. c.13; c.27
- 17 44 & 45 Vict. c.34
- 18 38 & 39 Vict. c.55
- 19 The Builder, Vol. 22, No. 1100, 5 March 1864, p.174



- 20 Arnold, R.A. The History of the Cotton Famine, London, 1864, pp. 204-6, p.297. Arnold quoted figures for the increase in pauperism in 1862 due to the cotton famine. This rose from 2.9% to 13.7%
- 21 25 & 26 Vict. c.110
- 22 26 & 27 Vict. c.91
- 23 26 & 27 Vict. c.90
- 24 Arnold, R.A. op.cit. p.454
- 25 Ibid. Table 1
- 26 Sums loaned under the 1863 Act:
- |               |          |     |    |
|---------------|----------|-----|----|
| Sewage        | £229,558 | 17s | 6d |
| Roads         | 555,082  | 2s  | 6d |
| Water         | 230,718  |     |    |
| Parks         | 29,050   |     |    |
| Cemeteries    | 28,500   |     |    |
| Land drainage | 14,493   |     |    |
| Gas works     | 10,332   |     |    |
| Public Baths  | 5,000    |     |    |
- Arnold, R.A. op.cit. Table 1 (Report, 7 April 1864)
- 27 It was estimated that the land, building and labour would cost £27,000 and that a rate of 1d in the £ would repay the interest and capital in 30 years. The Builder, Vol. 22, No. 1100, 5 March 1864, p.174
- 28 Hamer, op.cit. p.57
- 29 Abram, A History of Blackburn, op.cit. p.378
- 30 Arnold, R.A. op.cit. p.561
- 31 Aspden, T. Preston Guide, Preston, 1868, p.36
- 32 Hewitson, op.cit. p.328  
The cost of forming the Avenham and Miller Parks was £20,207 7s 9d. This sum included the £4,000 for the purchase of land for Avenham Park. The forming of Moor Park cost £10,826 7s 9d
- 33 According to Curl, J.S. The Life and Work of Henry Roberts, Chichester, 1983, p.50, it was unlikely that this was Henry Roberts, F.S.A. the architect.
- 34 Roberts, H. Proposed People's Palace and Gardens for the Northern and Midland Counties to Employ Factory Operatives, London, 1863, p.15
- 35 MCC Proceedings, 1 April, 10 June, 2 December 1868
- 36 Ibid. 4 September, 2 December, 2 October 1868



- 37 Eversley, Lord. Commons, Forests and Footpaths, London, 1910, pp.16-7
- 38 Ibid. pp. 27-8  
Among the earliest members of the Society were John Stuart Mill and Professor T. Huxley. The first legal advisor was Philip Lawrence. He was succeeded by Sir Robert Hunter who became the first chairman of the National Trust in 1895. Octavia Hill took an active part in the Society. (See Chapter Eleven)
- 39 Ibid. p.212
- 40 29 & 30 Vict. c.107
- 41 39 & 40 Vict. c.56
- 42 62 & 63 Vict. p.43
- 43 Eversley, op.cit. p.318
- 44 Gould, P.C. 'Back to Nature' and 'Back to the Land' and the Socialist Revival 1880-1900, M.Phil.Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1982, p.183
- 45 "Gleanings", Clarion, 4 December 1897, quoted in Gould, op.cit. p.185
- 46 Eversley, op.cit. p.324
- 47 Gardeners' Chronicle, 6 October 1855, p.662
- 48 Ibid. 20 October 1855, p.693
- 49 Ibid. 27 October 1855, p.710
- 50 "Opening of Bolton Park and the "Heywood" Recreation Ground", Bolton Guardian, May 1866, p.13
- 51 Hewitson, op.cit. p.328
- 52 MPPC Minutes, Vol. 3, 26 October 1855, p.157



## CHAPTER TEN

### DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT, 1865-1880: THE LIVERPOOL PARKS

This period is distinguished from the preceding period by two main features: certain significant changes in park design and facilities occur; and, towards the end of the period, a marked acceleration in park development can be detected. In 1871 and 1872 legislation intended to stimulate the development of parks and regulate their use was passed, but the main Act to affect park development in this period was the Public Health Act 1875. The significance of this legislation will be assessed. From the late 1860s certain features in park design become more apparent. They include the introduction of such structures as palm-houses and bandstands and the development of commemorative planting. Examples of these features will be examined in the context of the Liverpool and other parks, and their significance in terms of recreation facilities and the social and political roles of the park will be evaluated.

#### The Liverpool Parks

Between 1862 and 1872 Liverpool opened four new parks, more than any other town in the period, but action to provide parks dated from two decades earlier. In the mid-1840s the Health of Towns Association of Liverpool began pressing for consideration to be given to town planning. With the example of Edinburgh New Town before them, they advocated the rebuilding of Liverpool, starting with the worst districts. Future extensions to the town should not be allowed to take place piecemeal.<sup>1</sup> Plans for improving the town were called for in 1850 by the Liverpool Improvements Committee and H.P. Horner's plan was selected. This plan recommended straightening existing roads and providing a network of linked roads to improve communications with the centre of the city. A further recommendation was for a:

belt of garden or park land bounding the present extent of the town, and insuring the interposition of a stretch of comparative country between the existing buildings and any more of a town character.<sup>2</sup>

Under this plan nine parks would be formed eventually, but the Corporation decided not to implement it on the grounds of expense and it was not until



more than a decade later that any action was taken on parks. Wavertree Park was opened in 1856 and in 1862 Liverpool Council agreed that an avenue called Shiel Road should be made and, to the west of this road, a fifteen-acre site should be formed into Shiel Park.<sup>3</sup> The following year the Council passed a resolution that "it is expedient to provide parks for the people" but it did not define the nature of that expediency and it is not clear why action to promote parks took place at that particular time in Liverpool. J.A. Picton wrote in 1875 that soon after Shiel Park was formed:

The mania for parks had taken such a hold of the public mind, that after steadily resisting for many years the application of the ratepayers' money to such a purpose, the Council, in deference to public opinion, determined on the formation of Stanley Park ... Sefton Park ... (and Newsham Park).<sup>4</sup>

This would appear to confirm that the climate of opinion could effectively stimulate the development of parks.

In 1864 a Commission of Enquiry was set up to consider the question of establishing parks in the north end of the town, eleven sites were visited and the Woodlands and Walton Lodge Estate selected.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the inhabitants of Everton and West Derby recommended that the Newsham House Estate should be developed as a public park.<sup>6</sup> Under the Liverpool Improvement Act 1865 a loan of £500,000 was raised and powers granted to create three parks, Newsham, Stanley and Sefton Parks, financed out of the rates.<sup>7</sup> These sites were almost equidistant from the pier-head and, with the botanic gardens and Prince's Park, in effect formed a ring of parks (Figure 63). The parks were formed on what was then the outskirts of Liverpool. The fields on the north side of Stanley Park in 1893 can be clearly seen in Figure 64, with the urban districts on the western and southern sides.

Newsham Park was opened in 1868. The lakes, curling ponds, and footpaths had been completed by that date as had the roads, sewers, and footbridge over the lake, but the lodges, entrance gates and external fences had not been completed, neither had the proposed windmill and its machinery. The estimated total cost of the labour and material for the completed park was £51,899 7s 2d.<sup>8</sup>



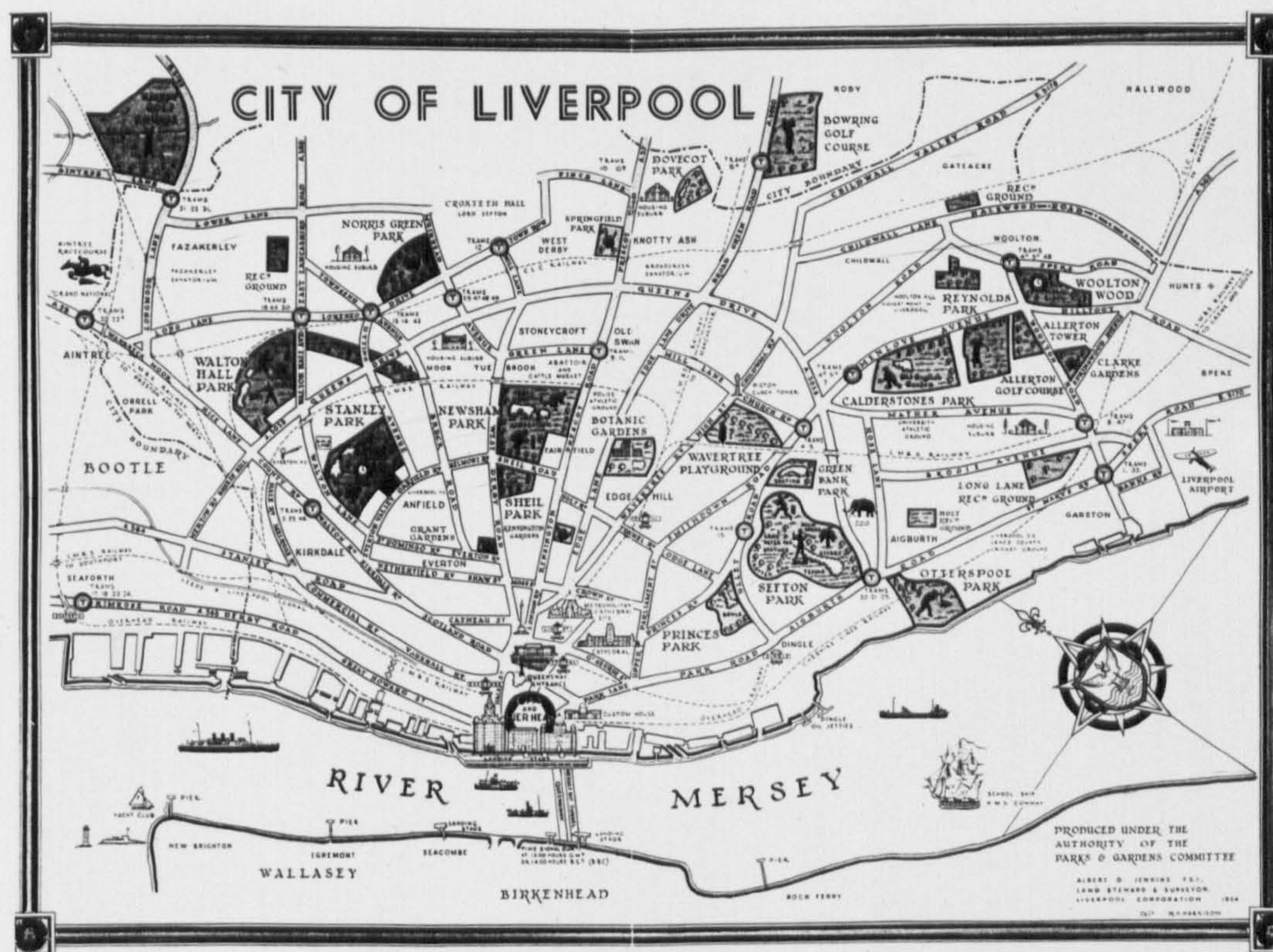


Figure 63 Liverpool Parks, 1934. The inner ring was formed by 1841-72. The parks of the outer areas were added later. (Liverpool City Council)





Figure 64 Stanley Park, Liverpool O.S. 1893



In all three projects, land for the parks was bought in conjunction with land for building development in order to help to recoup costs. At Sefton Park, for example, the cost of the land was £263,176. The designers' estimate was £85,000 but even by late 1868 the estimate for the total cost of the work on the park including the surrounding roads had risen to £186,548 5s 0d.<sup>9</sup> To balance this the Corporation expected to recoup £200,000 from the sale of building plots. By 1890 £118,000 had been recouped and sufficient building plots still remained to produce a further £46,000.

By 1890 Sefton Park had cost the ratepayers £292,266 but Lord Sefton benefitted from the venture, for the agricultural value of the land was £1,350 and the Corporation had bought it from him for over £250,000. Invested at 4%, this gave him a return of £10,000 which, as a witness to a Parliamentary Enquiry on the Liverpool Corporation Bill held in 1890 stated, "was a very good thing for him". In addition the City Surveyor reported that the construction of the park had improved the value of the estates in the immediate vicinity and, as these were owned by Lord Sefton, he had enjoyed the benefit of a greatly increased income for the past twenty years. His only contribution to this "has been to drive a four-in-hand and live in the lap of luxury" while the people of Liverpool had been "toiling and sweating in order to make both ends meet".<sup>10</sup>

The significance of the Liverpool parks lay not only in the scale of the project and the costs involved, but also their location within the growing city and in their design. Stanley Park, 1870 was designed by Edward Kemp of Birkenhead Park and it therefore represented the continuation of the Paxton influence on park design in Liverpool that had started with Prince's Park. Sefton Park, 1872 was the first in the country to be designed by a Frenchman and its design showed the influence of Parisian park design.

### Stanley Park

A comparison between the designs of Stanley Park (Figure 64) and Birkenhead Park (Figure 26) indicates the differences between them and the features that they had in common. In both, the planting around the periphery shields the parks from their surroundings. Birkenhead Park consisted in effect of two main open areas of ground each with a lake



and winding footpaths. At Stanley Park there is one main open site traversed by footpaths with a fishpond and boating lake in the north-west corner. One of the main differences between the two parks was the introduction of formal features at Stanley Park. A hint of this can be seen in the area of the lakes for the north-west entrance path leads into a circle from which the paths branch symmetrically. But the strongest formal feature was the esplanade on the south-western side which appeared like "the advance-work of a formidable citadel" (Figure 65). There were two terraces, one six feet above the other. On the upper promenade was a central pavilion sixteen yards in diameter flanked by two smaller octagonal pavilions all in red sandstone (Architect E.R. Robson). These were used as shelters. The lake was crossed by five bridges and the ornamental gardens were:

surrounded everywhere with mounds of earth,  
and circling and curved and twisted walks,  
and plantations of evergreen and ornamental  
trees and flowering shrubs of choicest selection.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, according to Picton, there was considerable criticism of the "ornate character" of the grounds and the "expensive nature" of the architecture. Green turf, trees and shrubs as in Hyde Park "would have given more freedom and enjoyment to the toiling multitudes for whom the park was intended".<sup>12</sup>

Provision was made in the park for riders but it was "not of sufficient extent to become fashionable" and the open grass of the park was laid out as playing fields. Boating was allowed on the lake. The buildings in the park included a small six-sided iron pavilion, a boathouse, which was a wooden pavilion on a stone base, and a bandstand. In 1899 a palm house designed by Mackenzie and Moncur was erected. This was donated by Mr Henry Yates Thompson to commemorate William Gladstone and was called the Gladstone Conservatory. It cost nearly £10,000.<sup>13</sup>

### Sefton Park

The park that "takes the palm for size and beauty" was Sefton Park.<sup>14</sup> The competition for the design for this park was won in 1867 by Edouard André of Paris and Lewis Hornblower of Liverpool. Hornblower had earlier contributed to the design of various buildings in Birkenhead Park. The second prize was won by Edward Milner. The Council drew up a list of





Figure 65 E.R. Robson, Terrace and shelters, Stanley Park  
(Liverpool City Libraries)



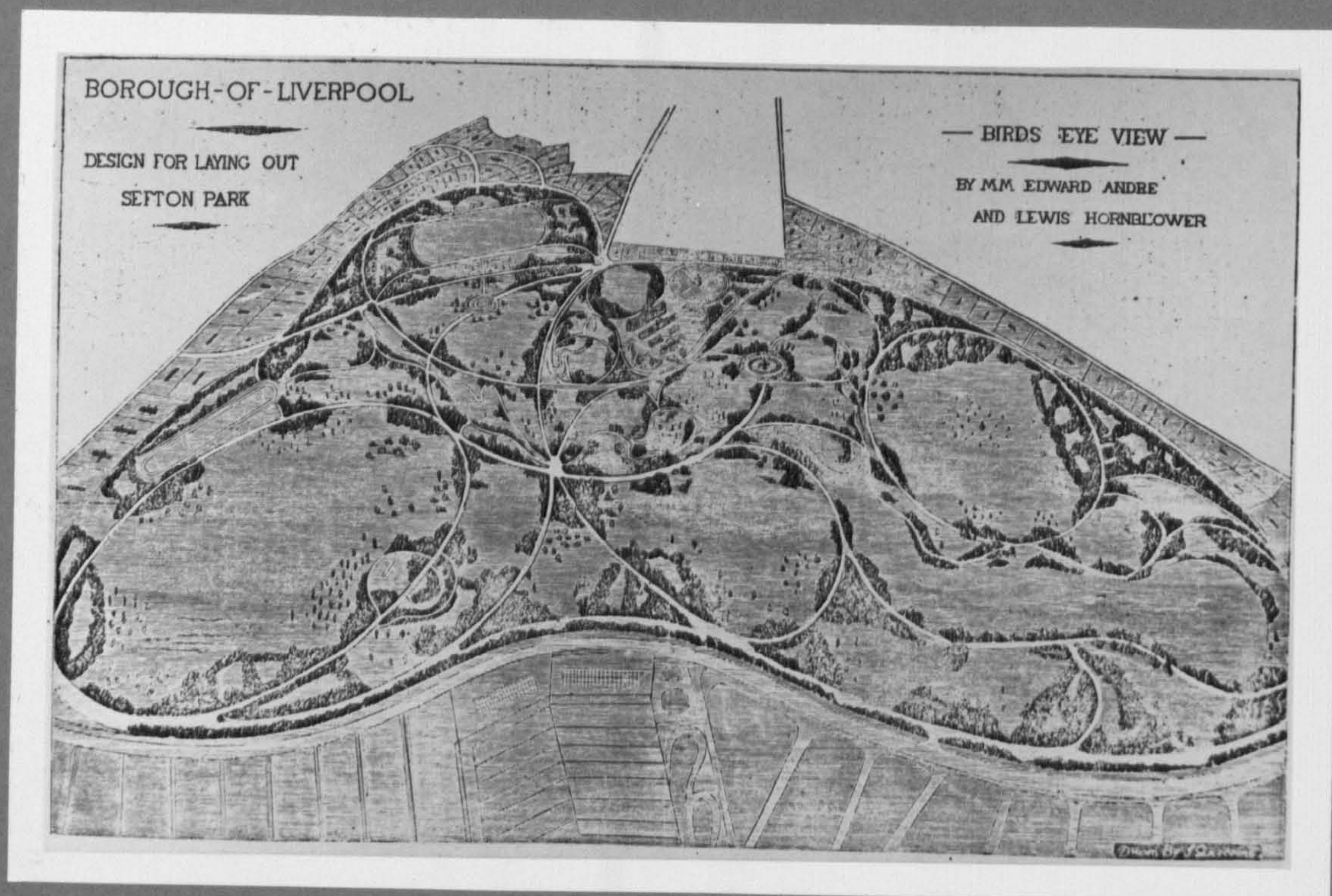


Figure 66 E. André Sefton Park, plan 1867  
 (Builder, Vol. 25, No. 1281, 24 August 1867, p.626)



interesting and sensible points to guide the competitors.

- 1st Convenience in the entrances to the Park.
- 2nd The maintenance of good general effect by preserving open the longest vistas, so as to increase the apparent size.
- 3rd Artistical distribution in masses of planting, especially as regards these vistas, and the views into the Park from the proposed building sites.
- 4th The position of various objects as points of interest for terminating the vistas, such as churches, band houses, refreshment pavilions, &c.
- 5th The outline and motif of the ornamental water and its relation to the scenery.
- 6th The best site for a Botanic Garden, regarding access from the town, shelter, and non-interference with the Public Park.
- 7th The line of the walks combining advantageous points of sight, and ready communication to all parts of the grounds.
- 8th The position of the grounds and gardens reserved for park residents, so as not to encroach on the Public Park.
- 9th Open and suitable ground for cricketing, reviews, &c.
- 10th The distribution of the Building Sites in such a manner as to secure the maximum return with the least possible damage to the ornamental character of the Park.
- 11th The arrangement of roads in connection thereunto.<sup>15</sup>

The problem faced by André was that the site was completely barren and there were no existing trees to harmonise with the surroundings, but it was very undulating. In his design (Figure 66) André incorporated a cricket ground, review ground, a bird park, a deer park, and a nineteen-acre botanic garden enclosed by railings. Down the centre of the park ran a valley longitudinally, which was joined by another coming from the eastern (Mossley Hill) side of the park. Both valleys had a drop of 45 feet and this suggested to the designer a series of cascades leading to a main lake in the south of the park. It was, however, in the layout of the carriage drives within and around the park that one of the main differences between the design of Sefton Park and Kemp's design for Stanley Park or Paxton's for Birkenhead Park can be seen. The curves of the former were of almost geometric regularity. Ellipses merged with half-circles providing and enclosing a series of open spaces with peripheral planting. At commanding spots it was intended that kiosks and other ornamental buildings should be erected. In addition to these a large bandstand, first- and second-class restaurants, cricket pavilion,



markers' pavilion and covered sheds for boat-houses, deer-house, and equestrians would be provided. Other buildings that were planned included lodges at the entrance gates and a grand conservatory with fountains and monumental cascades.<sup>16</sup>

At the opening of Sefton Park The Builder commended the general arrangement but was critical of the lakeside walks which allowed people to get close to the lake but did not achieve the effect of bringing shelving banks of grass and foliage down to the water's edge. It was also very critical of "those ludicrous travesties called "rustic" iron seats" in which cast iron imitated branches and twigs.<sup>17</sup>

Changes to the design occurred both before the park had opened and thereafter. The botanic gardens which would have cost an additional £40,000 and were to have been laid out as a formal garden with grand conservatory and glass houses were abandoned and many proposed buildings were not constructed. The most important building to be built is the octagonal Palm House designed and built by Mackenzie and Moncur which opened in 1896 (Figure 67). This has an ambulatory and two tiers of glass domes topped by an octagonal lantern. Inside the interior is supported by slender iron columns and a central spiral iron staircase leads to the upper level. This was also the gift of Henry Yates Thompson. Full-size statues of notable botanists and explorers such as Darwin, Linnaeus, Cook and Columbus, were placed at each angle of the Palm House.<sup>18</sup> In 1903 the facilities of Sefton Park included drill grounds, cricket, football, tennis, archery and bowling.<sup>19</sup>

The development of the Liverpool parks between 1862 and 1872 demonstrated that it was possible to coordinate park location and in so doing create a ring of parks. Stanley Park at the extreme north of the town, Shiel and Newsham Parks, the botanic gardens and Wavertree Park continued the arc of parks around to Sefton and Prince's Parks. This was a conscious plan, was recognised at the time<sup>20</sup> and had been advocated in the 1850s. In addition, Sefton Park introduced to this country the influence of French park design. This more geometric layout, in the sense of paths and drives in the form of circles and ellipses enclosing areas for a range of activities, contrasted with the less structured design of the earlier parks. It also differs from Kemp's design for Stanley Park in which



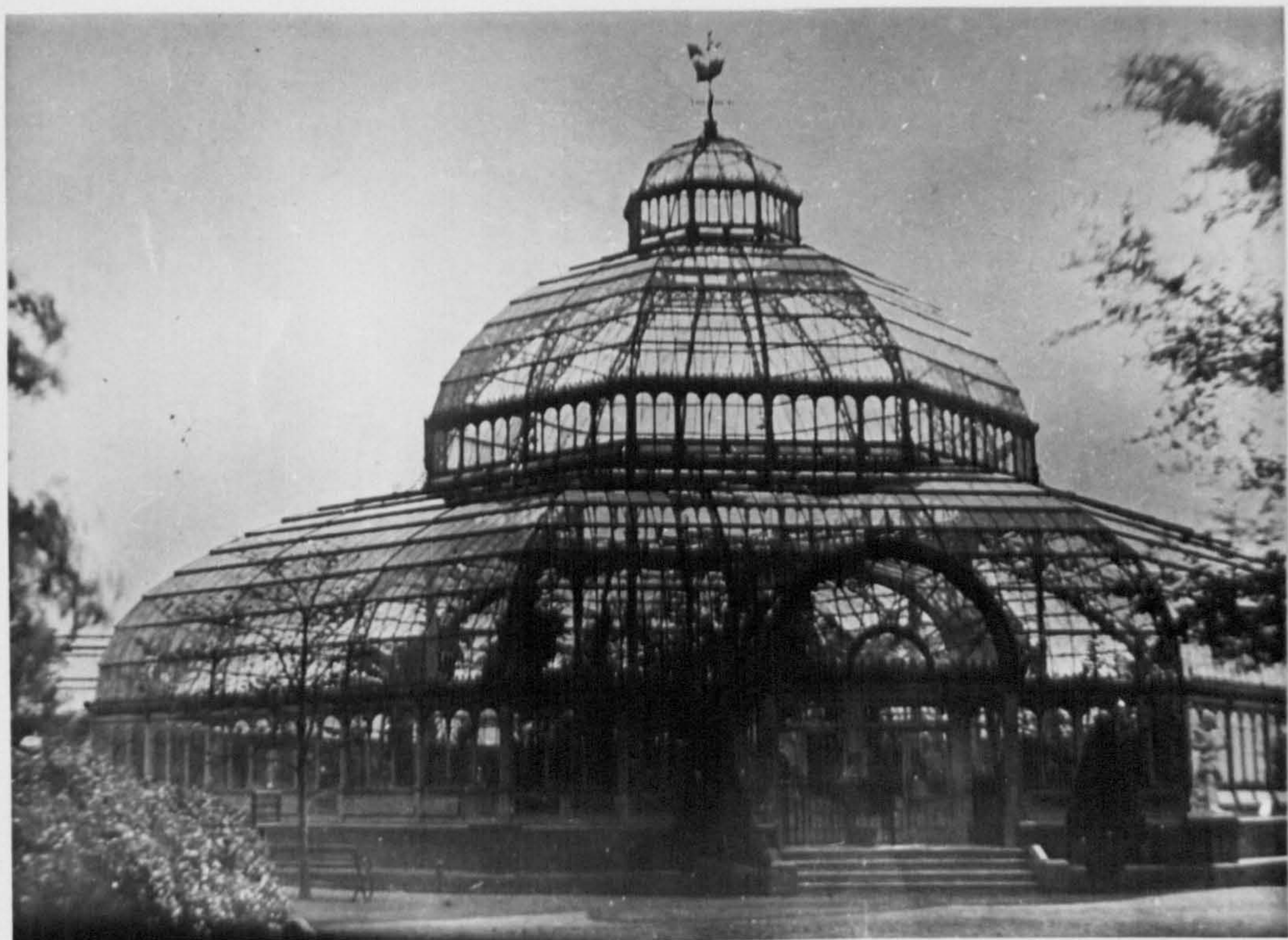
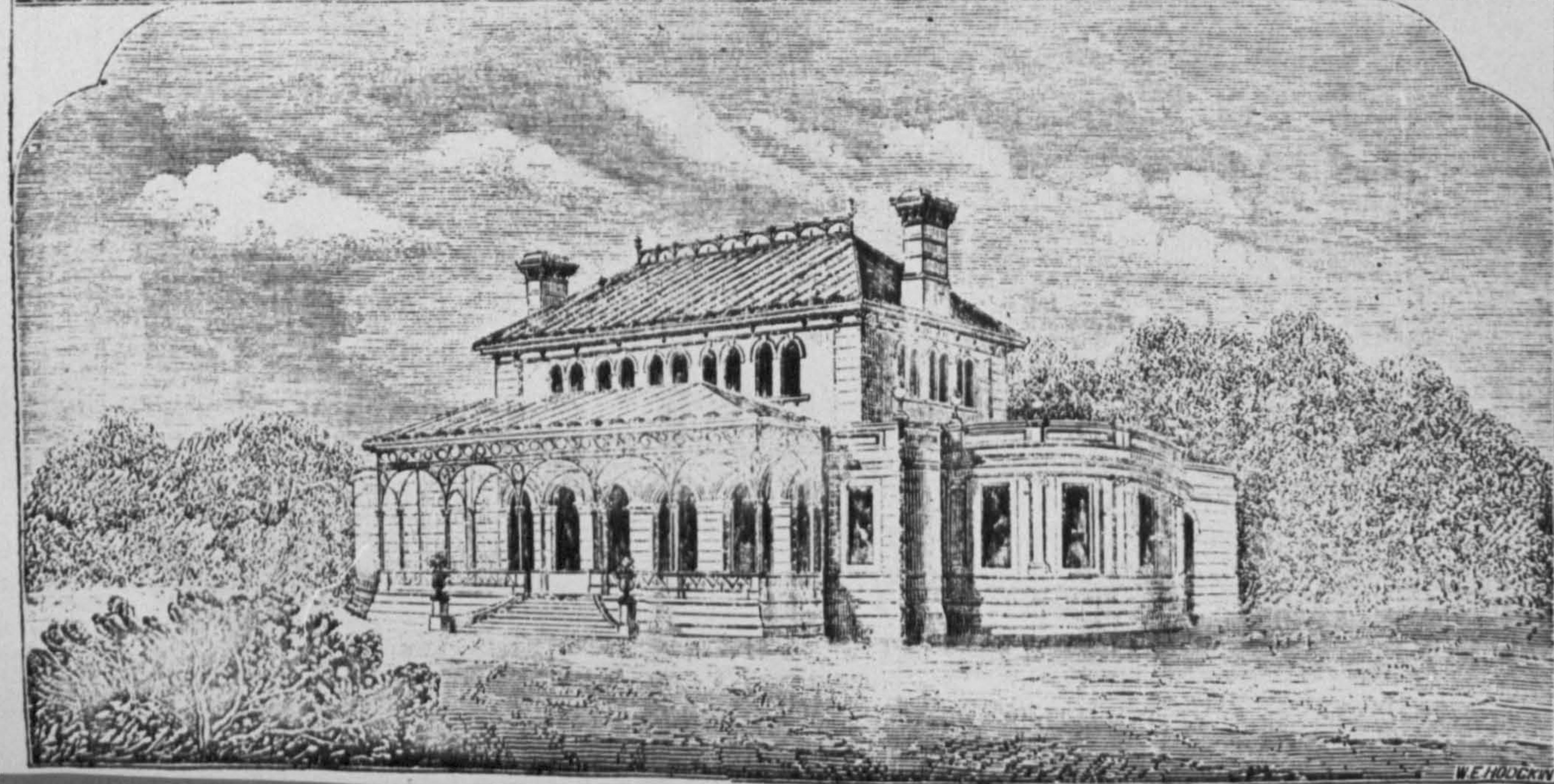
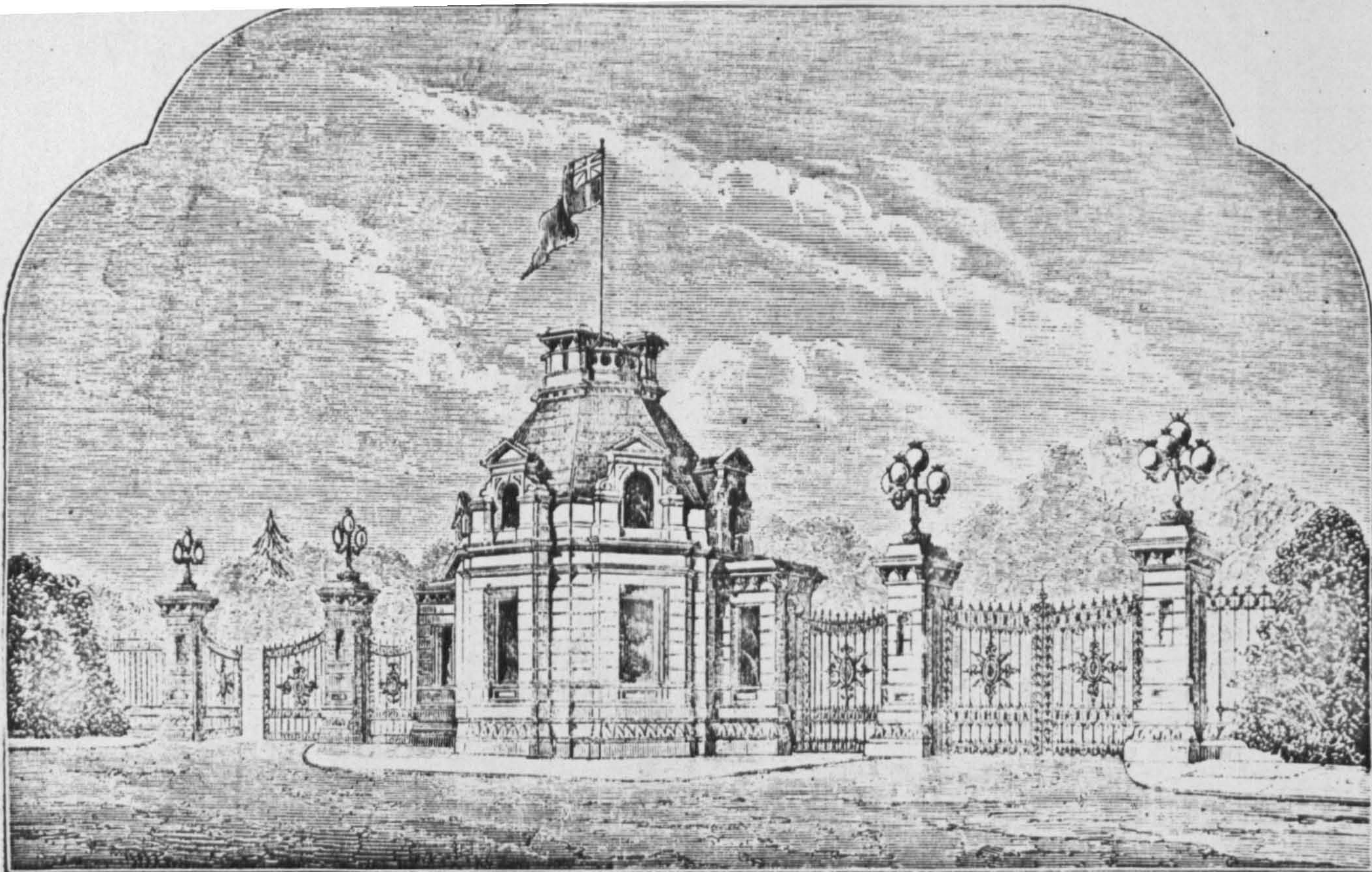


Figure 67      Palm House, Sefton Park      (Liverpool City Libraries)







there was one main central open area for sports etc. and other facilities were located around the periphery.

The buildings at Sefton Park were varied both in size and architectural style. At the main entrance gate the influence of the French Second Empire can be seen in the small octagonal stone central lodge.(Figure 68, top). This was symmetrical about both axes and represented a move away from the picturesque lodges favoured earlier in the century in the Manchester/Salford Parks or Birkenhead Park. Other lodges such as the gardener's house (middle left) and the shepherd's house (middle right) were buildings of a substantial size compared say, with the lodges at Victoria Park, London. In the shepherd's house the half-timbering, the roof lines and chimneys are all indicative of the English Domestic Revival. By contrast, the cricket pavilion (lower) with its round-headed windows, reflected in the round arches of the verandah, was more symmetrical in plan. There were other buildings such as the boathouse (Figure 69), but the most important building in Sefton Park, by virtue of its size, was undoubtedly the octagonal Palm House by Mackenzie and Moncur, 1896.

#### Palm Houses, Pavilions and Bandstands

It is from the late 1870s onwards that structures such as palm houses, pavilions, and bandstands were increasingly introduced into the parks. As the photograph of the palm house in Sefton Park shows, this is a large-scale structure but, because it is constructed of iron and glass, it does not dominate the surroundings in a way that a solid brick or stone structure would have done. Nevertheless, its scale marked an important change in the scale of buildings introduced into certain parks. Palm houses provided shelter and so extended the use of the park in bad weather, in addition the experience of light and foliage inside them was quite different from that experienced in the open air. Plants and trees could be grown in them that would not survive in the open and so visitors would be introduced to a wider range of plants which included tropical and sub-tropical ones. That educational role was reinforced at Sefton Park by the

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Opposite page: L. Hornblower, Buildings designed for Sefton Park  
Figure 68: (Builder, Vol. 23, No.1281, 24 August 1867, p.627)



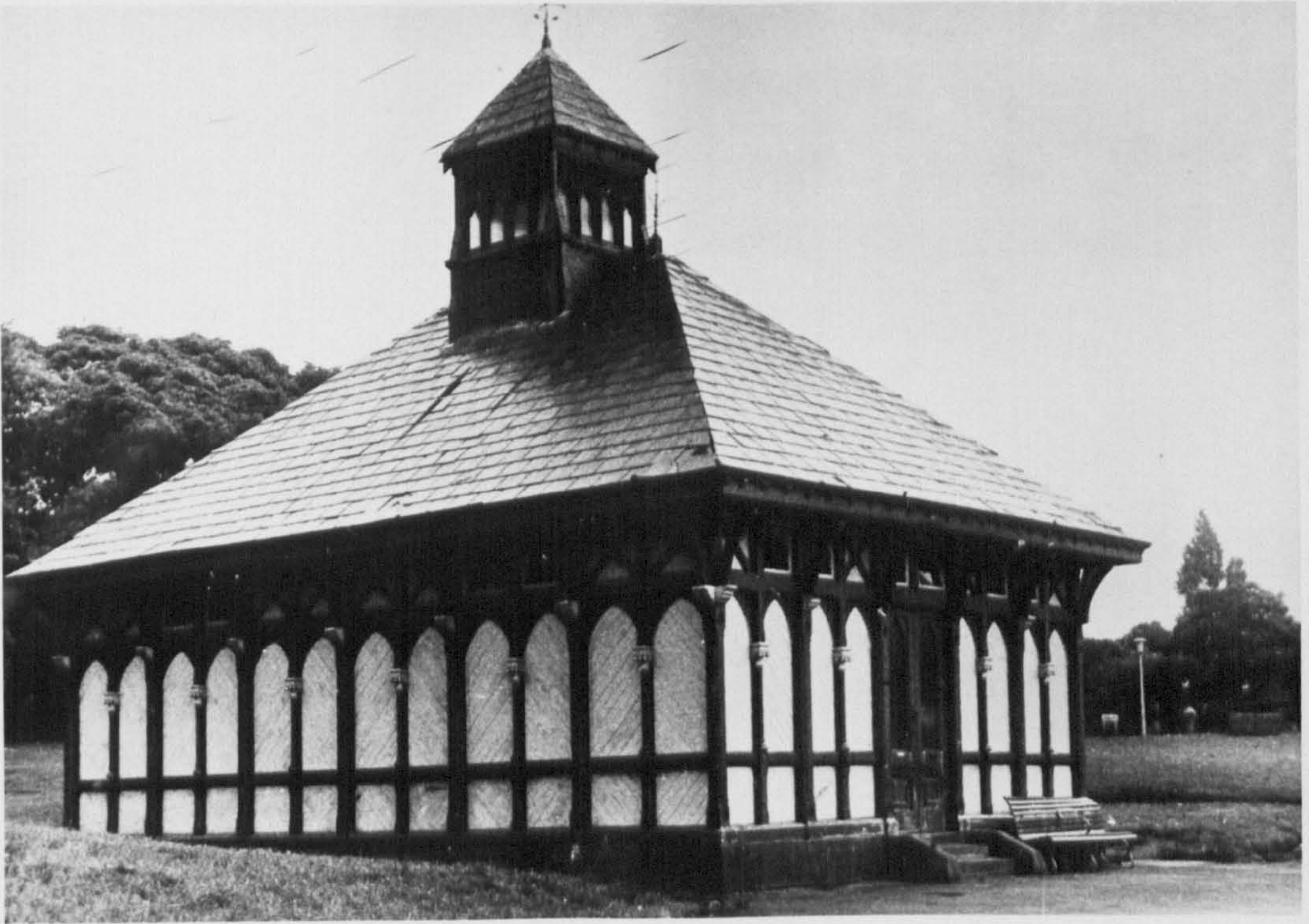


Figure 69      Boathouse, Sefton Park      (Liverpool City Libraries)





Figure 70 Conservatory, West Park, Wolverhampton 1896  
(Wolverhampton Borough Council)

Figure 71 Iron pavilion (pagoda), Chapel Field Gardens, Norwich 1880  
(Norfolk County Library)





statues of notable botanists and explorers positioned around the Palm House. Moreover, local and national pride was reinforced by the allusion to explorers and hence to Liverpool's position as an important port. Figure 70 shows the conservatory in West Park, Wolverhampton. West Park was opened in 1881 and the conservatory, built with the proceeds of a floral fete held in 1893, was opened in 1896.<sup>21</sup> Here the scale of the building was not so obvious as it was surrounded by large trees and positioned so that only parts of it could be glimpsed from a distance.

In some of the smaller parks the scale of the structures introduced must have been rather overwhelming. Chapel Field Gardens, Norwich was a ten-acre site which was laid out and opened as a park in 1880, with a two-storey iron pavilion called a pagoda at its centre (Figure 71). This had been exhibited at the Paris and Philadelphia exhibitions of 1876 and had originally cost £2,000, but the Corporation of Norwich purchased it for £500. The roof and the railings of the upper storey were Chinese in design and the upper storey of the pavilion was reached by means of a spiral staircase.<sup>22</sup>

The introduction of bandstands dates from the early 1870s and thereafter their use steadily increased. Music was seen as an important moral influence, "musical cultivation is the safest and surest Method of popular culture" and therefore to be harnessed to social reform.<sup>23</sup> Indeed,

There is hardly any other Method (of social reform) taken separately to which greater importance should be attributed than to the providing of good moral public amusements, especially musical entertainment.<sup>24</sup>

On the Continent, orchestras gave concerts in the open air in public squares and parks daily, but the suggestion of an evening military concert in Trafalgar Square or on the Embankment suggests "a horrid crowd of roughs and pickpockets etc". Indeed, wrote W.S. Jevons in Methods of Social Reform (1883), not long ago it was thought to be impossible to open a public garden in the centre of London "so great are the fears of collecting the residuum there". This fear, he continued, has proved unjustified, "What makes the people vulgar but the total want of means to render them refined".<sup>25</sup> The provision of bandstands and conservatories was clearly seen as a means of promoting these civilising and refining influences:



a town is incomplete without its public park, and ... a public park should be considered incomplete without its winter garden and music pavilion ...<sup>26</sup>

By 1897 Reginald Blomfield the architect, wrote "A public park, it is agreed, must have a fountain and a bandstand ..." but he thought these were among the "most distressing" features of the parks because of their designs.<sup>27</sup> Gertrude Jekyll included bandstands among the common elements in park design which by 1918 "seemed to have acquired the quality of almost sacred precedents".<sup>28</sup> When Victoria Park, Portsmouth was opened in 1878 the particular attractions that were singled out in the description of the opening ceremony were the drinking fountain with its forty-feet diameter basin, the bandstand, and the children's playground with its swings and giant-stride.<sup>29</sup> In Albert Park, Middlesbrough which opened in 1868, a bandstand was built in 1890.<sup>30</sup>

When constructed of cast-iron, bandstands could be light airy structures that added to the variety and range of buildings in the parks. Manufacturers provided a wide range of designs as these illustrations from Walter MacFarlane & Co., Glasgow indicate (Figures 72-74). In addition, they provided designs for shelters (Figure 75), fountains, seating, railings and gates, and urinals (Figure 76). Figure 77 shows their design for a urinal (no longer in use) by the Thames in Reading. Blomfield was critical of such designs in cast-iron because of their ornate character, but even wooden bandstands were not necessarily simple in design. An early example of a wooden bandstand in Victoria Park, London is seen in Figure 45. Later in the century rustic wooden structures became popular and Figure 78 shows such a rustic bandstand in Clissold Park, London circa 1898.

Bandstands not only contributed to the variety of buildings within the park but also to the facilities for recreation offered. Band concerts were a popular feature in which park visitors either sat on seats arranged in circles around the bandstand (Figure 79), or heard the music while they strolled through the park. Works bands provided one of the few examples of working people contributing to the activities in the park. Both music and palm houses were seen as civilising and refining influences on the working class.



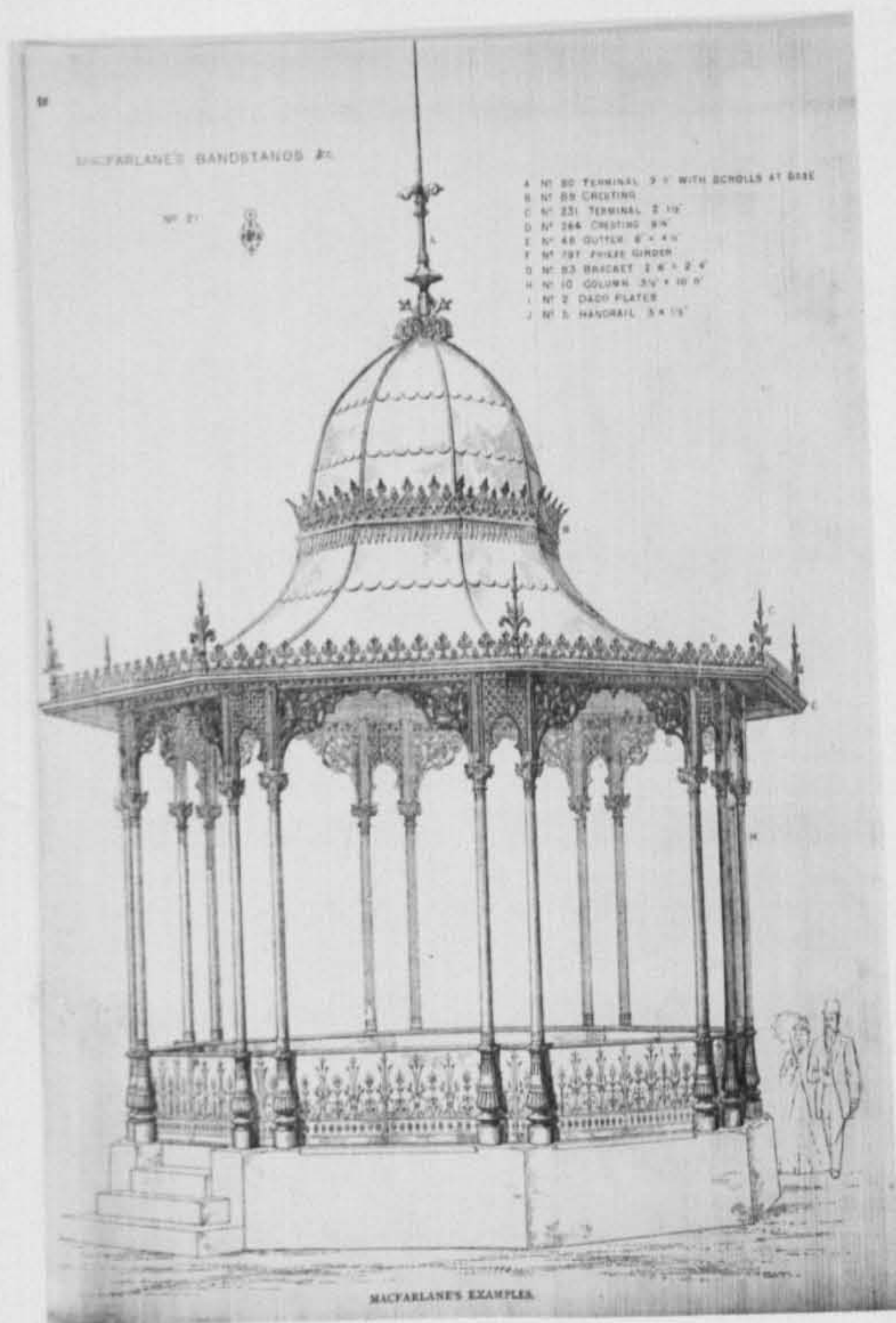


Figure 72 Bandstand No. 21  
 (Walter MacFarlane & Co.  
 Illustrated Catalogue  
 Vol. 1, c.1880, p.58)



Figure 73 Bandstand with clock-tower  
 Chalkwell Park, Southend-on-Sea  
 (Walter MacFarlane & Co.  
 Architectural Ironwork, p.57)

Figure 74 Bandstand, Springburn Public Park  
 (Ibid. p.61)





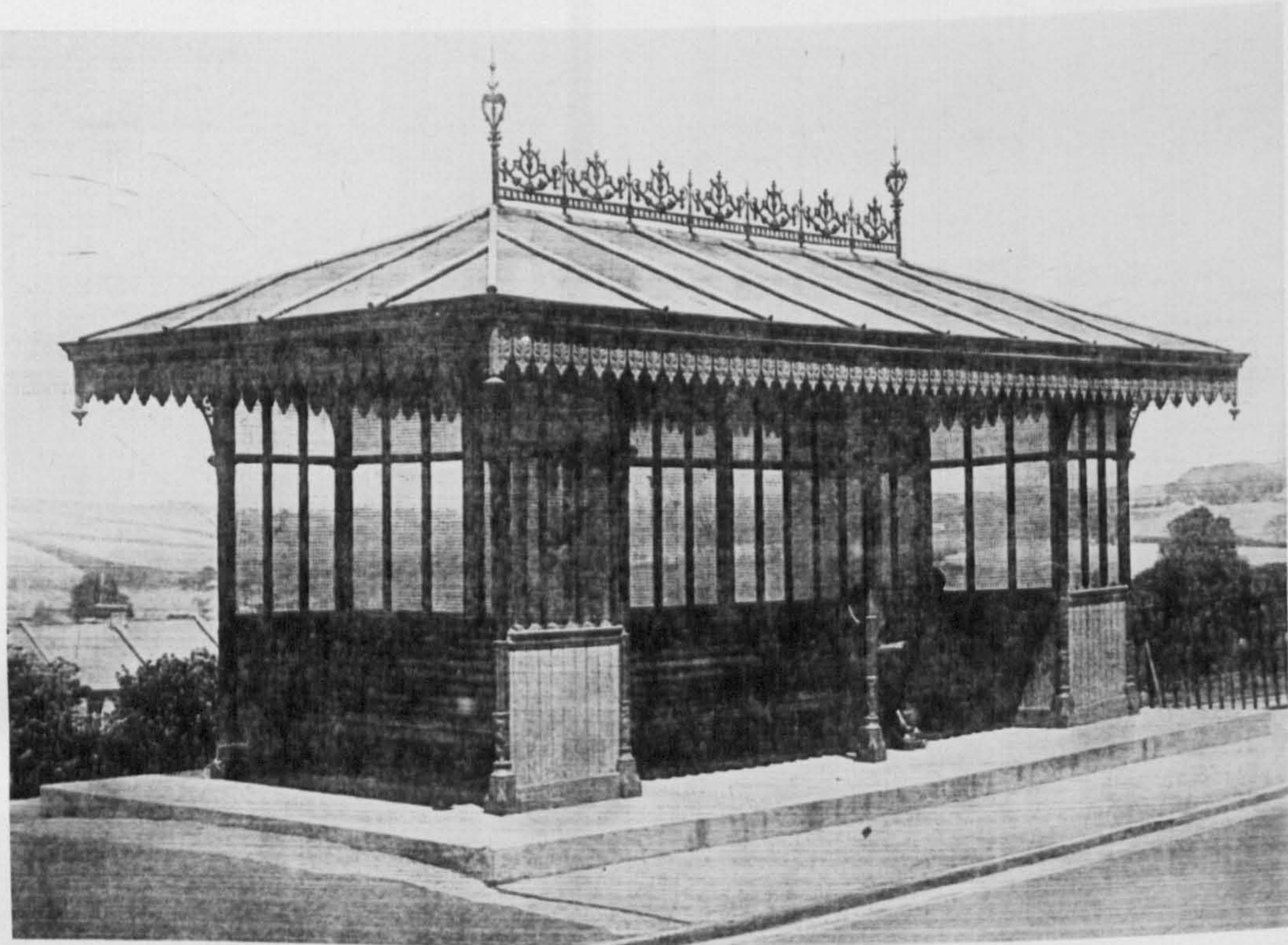


Figure 75 The Shelter, Alexandra Park, Plymouth  
(Walter MacFarlane & Co. Architectural Ironwork, p.66)



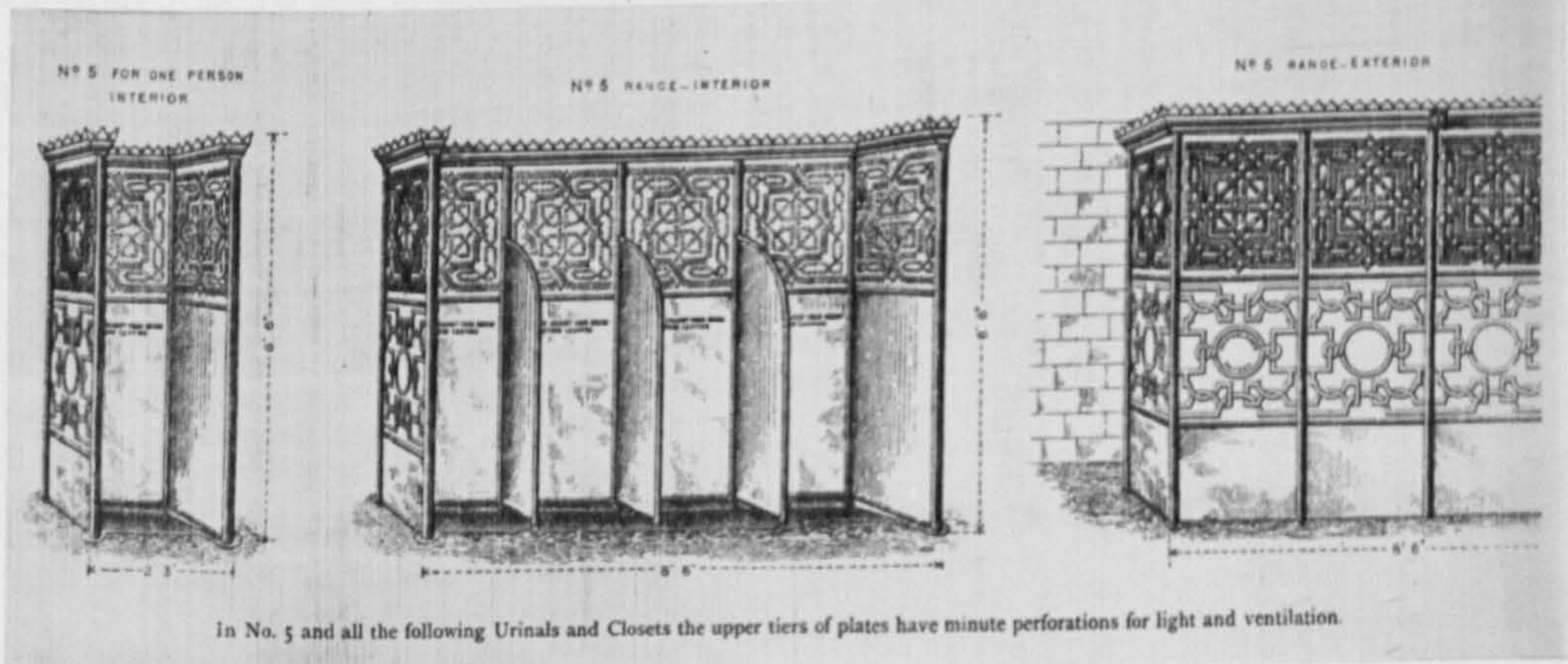


Figure 76 Urinal No. 5  
(Walter MacFarlane & Co., Illustrated Catalogue, Vol.2, p.431)

Figure 77 Urinal, Caversham Bridge, Reading (Walter MacFarlane & Co.)







Figure 78 Rustic Bandstand, Clissold Park, London (Sexby, op.cit. p.329)

Figure 79 Listening to music at West Park, Wolverhampton  
(Wolverhampton Borough Council)





### Carpet-bedding and Commemorative Planting

The other main feature that distinguished park design in the late 1860s and 1870s from that of earlier parks was the increased emphasis on the technique of planting known as carpet-bedding and the introduction of commemorative planting. Before the development of public and municipal parks, a park surrounding a private house or mansion consisted of turf and trees. Flowers would be planted in the flower garden and near the house according to the principles established by Repton and Loudon. But parks that were for public use often offered the only opportunity for many urban dwellers to see flowers growing. At Birkenhead Park in 1846, Kemp had recommended the planting of showy flowering plants and thereafter it was generally assumed that a blaze of colour would most appeal to visitors to the parks.<sup>31</sup> The basis of carpet-bedding was to provide the surface of a bed, which could be convex, concave or undulating, with a natural cover or close carpet. The flowering plants such as pelargoniums or shrubs would then be planted at intervals in this carpet, so that each individual plant could be seen against the background of the carpet surface.

In London in the mid-1860s the great showplace for flowers was the geometrical garden in Regent's Park, with its vivid display of verbenas, calceolarias and pelargoniums. This brilliant colouring contrasted with panels of grass, ivy, variegated mint, amaranthus and other plants and together the effect was of a floral frieze with bands and circles of colour.<sup>32</sup> In Victoria Park, London, a commentator particularly noted one bed "especially beautiful, in the shape of the Prince of Wales' feathers", and two other raised beds with trees in the centre around which were planted some 1,200 bedding plants "tastefully arranged with Pelargoniums, Ageratums, Verbenas, Coleus, Calceolarias and a variety of other beautiful plants".<sup>33</sup> But many critics objected to this gaudy glare of colour and to the monotony that resulted. To relieve this monotony foliage plants of graceful form and of considerable size were introduced in order to add height and interest. But this would not solve the problem of the lines and sections of colour masses which also needed to be remodelled. An idea that was advocated for spring planting, was to plant beds with white forget-me-nots and then dot them with brightly coloured tulips. Alternatively, white tulips could be dotted over a background of blue forget-me-nots or white arabis dotted with blue scilla. The Gardeners' Chronicle particularly praised the carpet-bedding in Battersea Park,



although it was John Gibson's development of the sub-tropical garden there that was considered to be his main contribution to nineteenth-century gardening<sup>34</sup> (Figure 80). At Battersea Park John Gibson planted a bed of succulents in which a dwarf grey-tinted sedum provided a neutral carpet and background for echevaria and shrubby sempervivums. Figure 81 shows an example of carpet bedding in Battersea Park, while the diagram in Figure 82 indicates the varieties of plants used to achieve particular effects.

The funds available for planting in other parks did not always permit such spectacular effects. Alexander McKenzie, who was in charge of the Embankment Gardens, Finsbury Park and Southwark Park, records that although £100 was authorised for bedding plants for the Victoria Embankment, only £25 was authorised for Finsbury Park and £10 for Southwark Park in 1871.<sup>35</sup>

Many parks acquired a reputation for their carpet-bedding and this was enhanced by other horticultural displays, particularly commemorative planting. When Victoria Park, Portsmouth was opened in 1878 the flower beds by each entrance gate were laid out in the design of the borough coat of arms.<sup>36</sup> At Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham the reputation for carpet-bedding was "increased in later years through the attraction of tours de force such as the Tudor Crown".<sup>37</sup> Figure 83 shows the bed designed at West Park, Wolverhampton, to commemorate the coronation of George V in 1911. Carpet-bedding in the form of the municipal coat of arms can be seen in Figure 84.<sup>38</sup>

Commemorative planting celebrated national events such as coronations, or municipal enterprise and even the Mayor's name was displayed in flowers in Middleborough in 1898.<sup>39</sup> Such planting testified to horticultural skills and to the tastes and preferences of those that paid for and largely controlled the parks, at the same time as it reinforced the dominant ideology of royalty and civic pride. Early in the twentieth-century floral clocks were introduced, but it cannot be argued that these in any way reinforced the dominant ideology although their intricacy and accuracy provided another indication of horticultural skills.<sup>40</sup> But however popular floral clocks were with the public, certain parks departments saw them as a "most degrading taste in



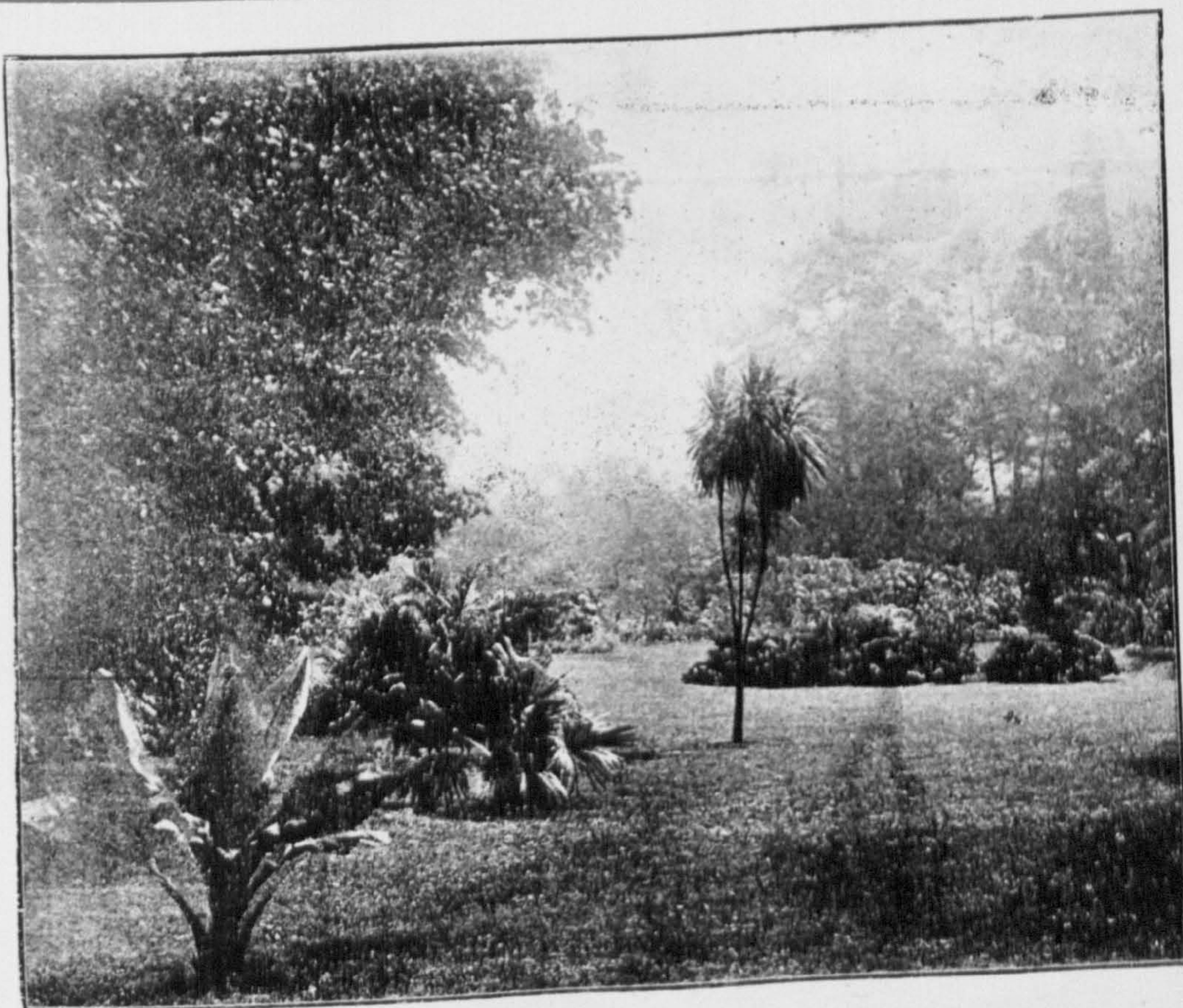
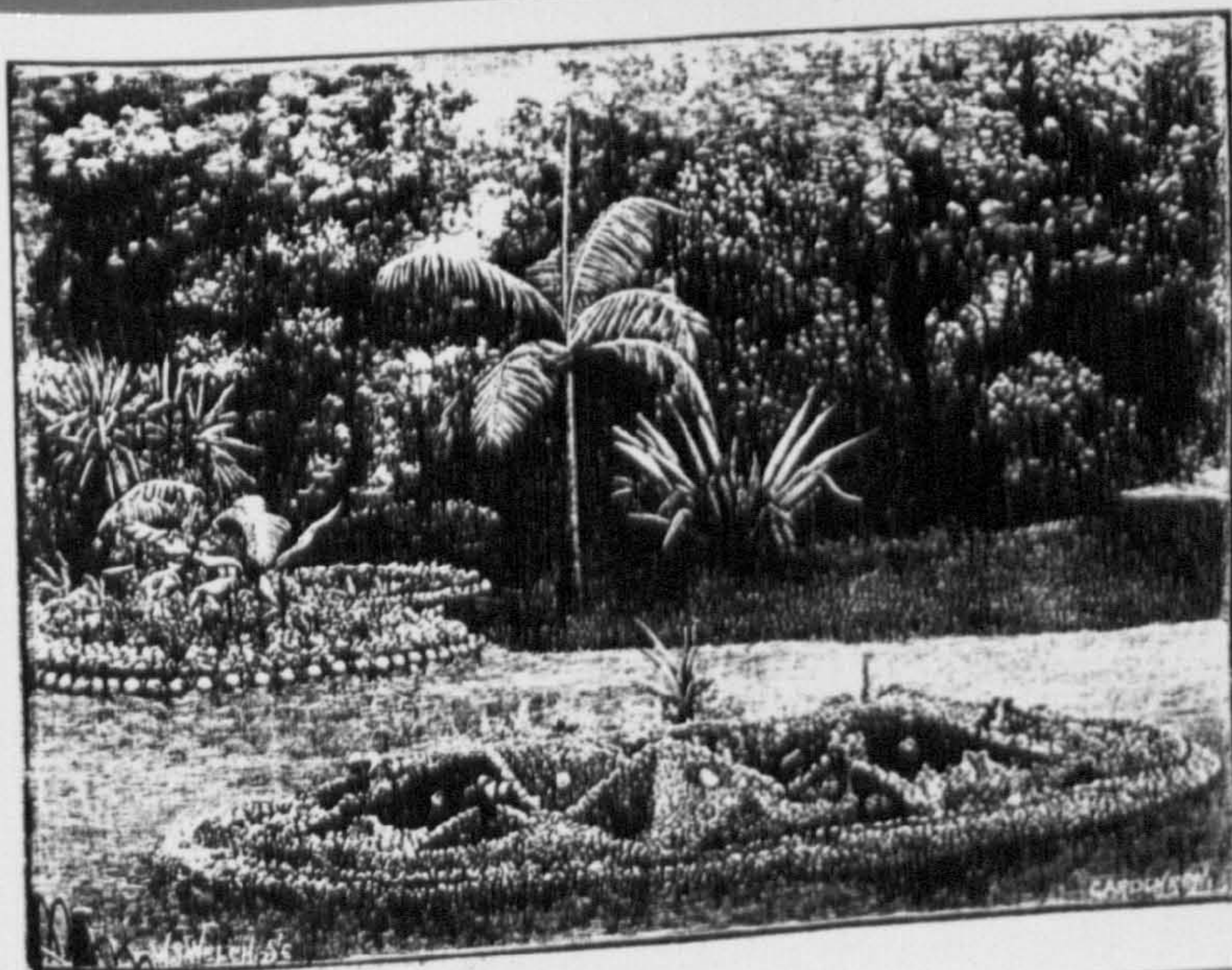


Figure 80 Sub-tropical garden, Battersea Park, c.1864  
(Sexby, op.cit. p.14)

Figure 81 Carpet-bedding, Battersea Park, 1892  
(Gardeners' Chronicle, 28 May 1892, p.683)





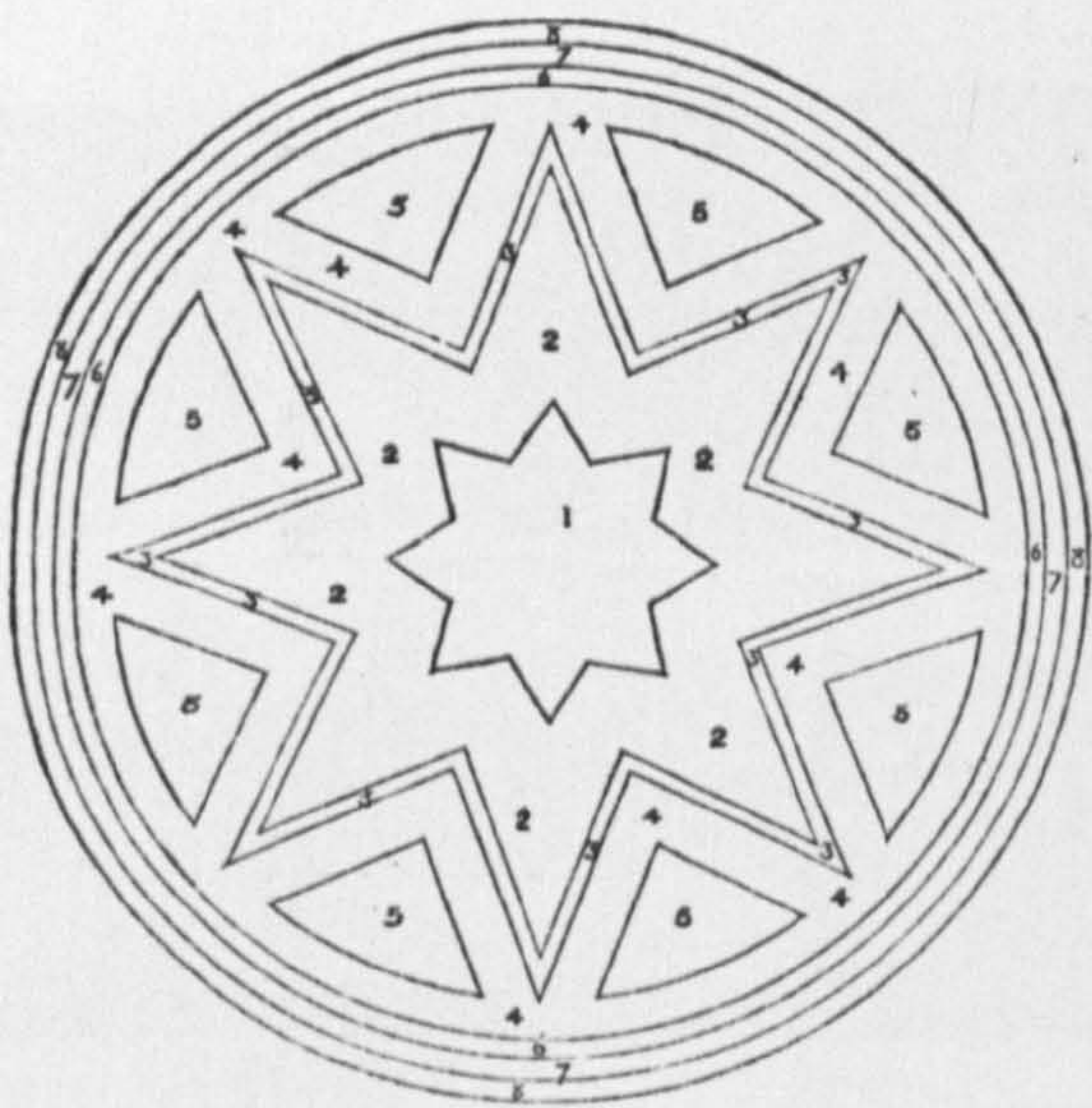


FIG. 220.

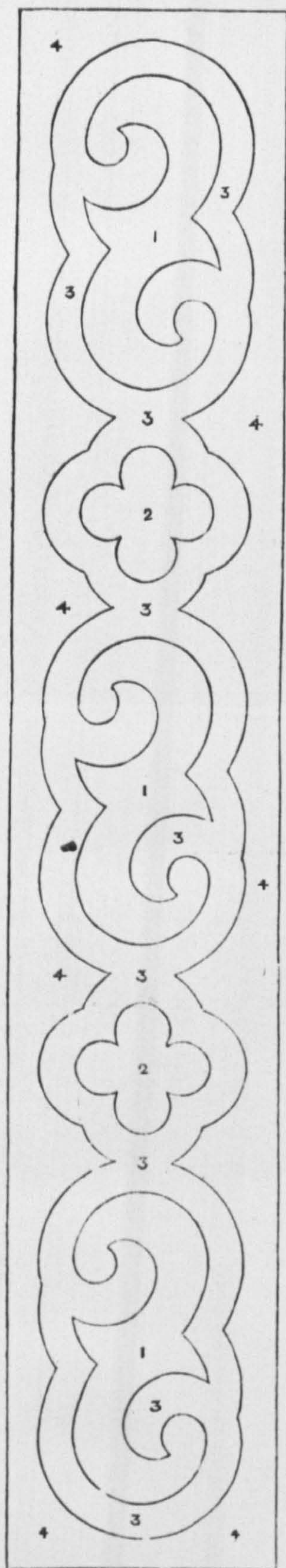


FIG. 218.

The first bed (fig. 218) is planted as follows :— 1, *Pyrethrum Golden Feather*; 2, *Santolina incana*; 3, *Alternanthera amoena*; 4, *Alternanthera paronychioides*, and margined with *Echeveria secunda glauca*. In fig. 219, 1 is *Antennaria tomentosa*; 2, *Alternanthera amoena*; 3, *A. paronychioides*; 4, *Pyrethrum Golden Feather*; margin, *Echeveria secunda glauca*. Fig. 220 is composed of, 1, *Pyrethrum Golden Feather*; 2, *Alternanthera amoena*; 3, *Santolina incana*; 4, *Alternanthera paronychioides*; 5, *A. magnifica*; 6, *Pyrethrum Golden Feather*; 7, *Alternanthera amoena*; 8, *Echeveria secunda glauca*; and in fig. 221 the arrangement is, 1, *Santolina lavandulifolia*; 2, *Alternanthera magnifica*; 3, *Pyrethrum Golden Feather*; 4, *Alternanthera amoena*; 5, *Santolina incana*; 6, *Alternanthera amoena*; and 7, *Echeveria secunda glauca*. All the plants used in these beds are of necessity small, and are kept pinched to a regular

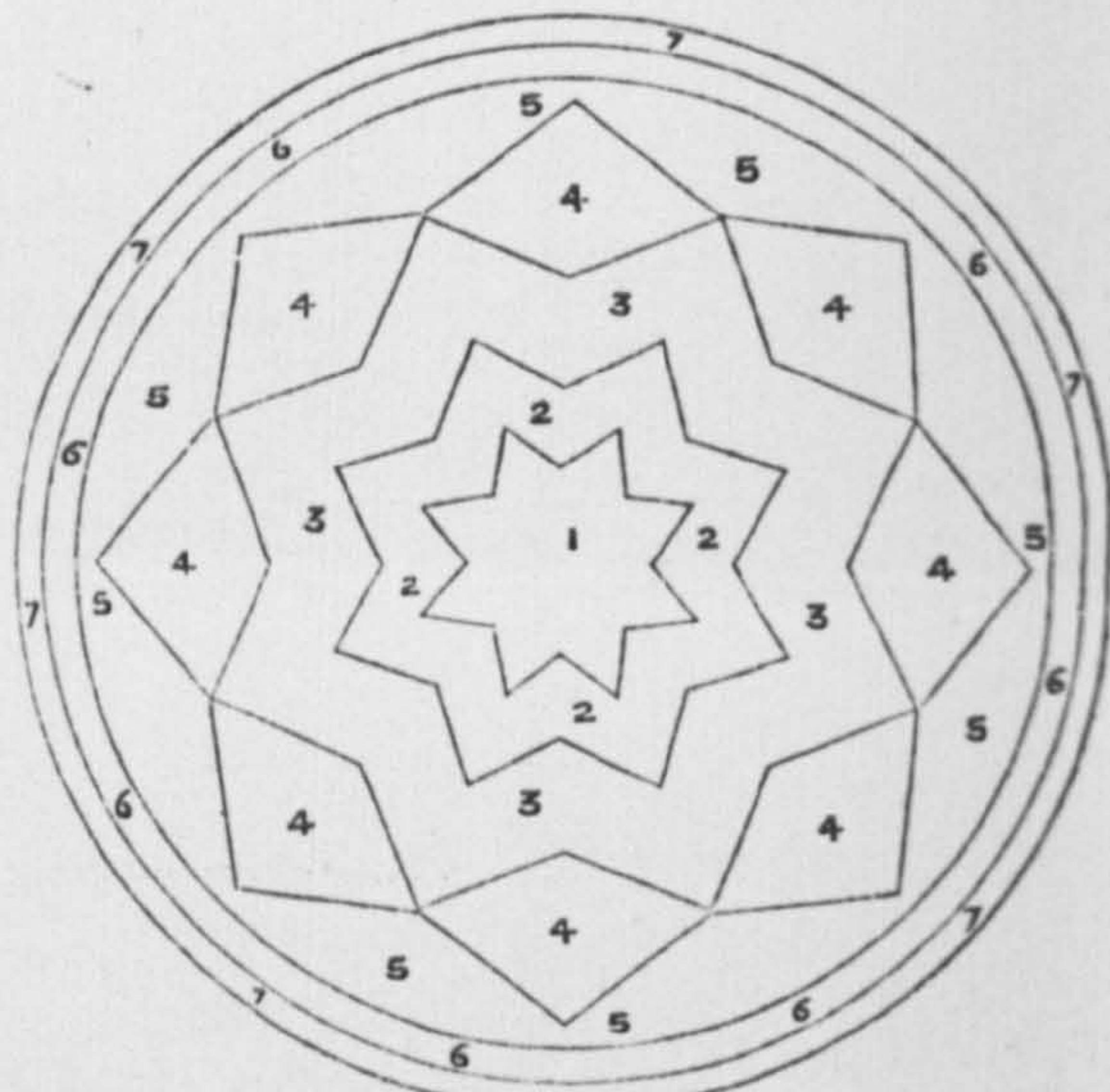


FIG. 221.

height in proportion to their habit, which produces panels, as it were, in the design, with most harmonious results. It is worthy of remark that flowers have never been so plentifully produced before at Battersea, doubtless in consequence of the drought. Watering has been a heavy item here this summer, to lessen which Mr. Gibson hit upon the capital method of raising the sides of the beds a little above the ordinary level, the edges being kept neatly in position by a stiff coating of a mixture of cow-dung and loam.

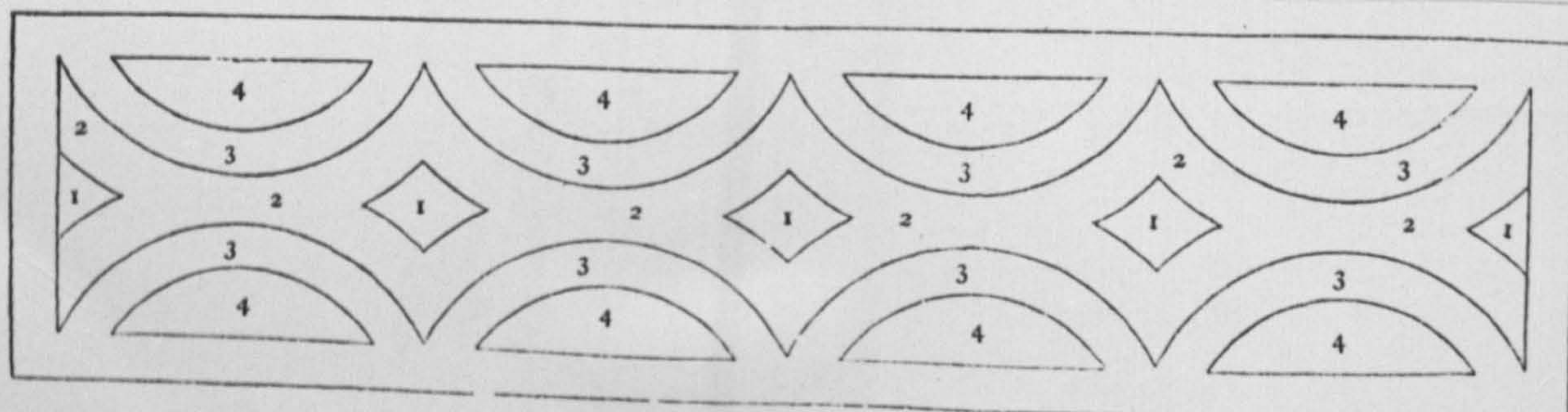


FIG. 219.



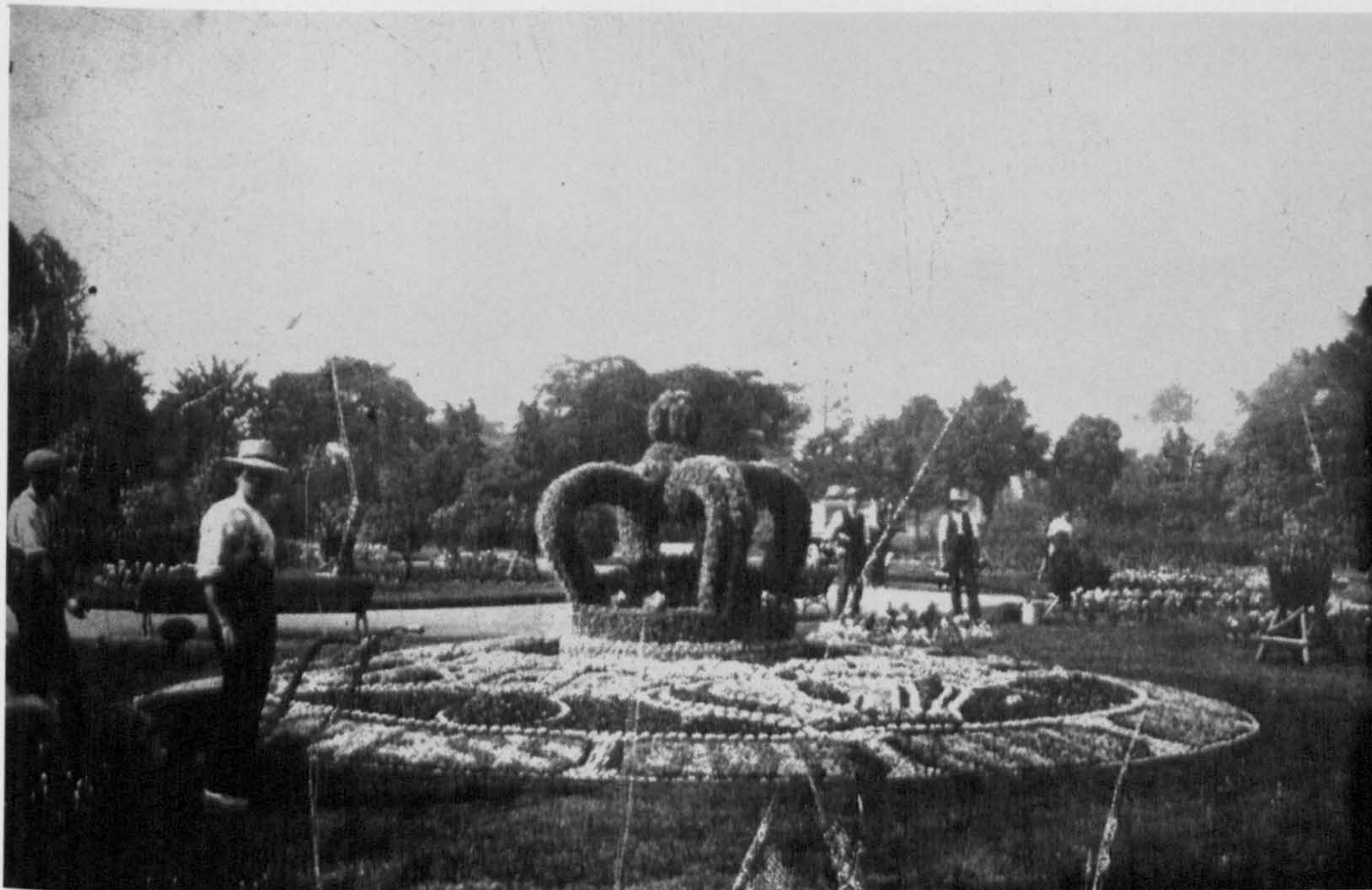
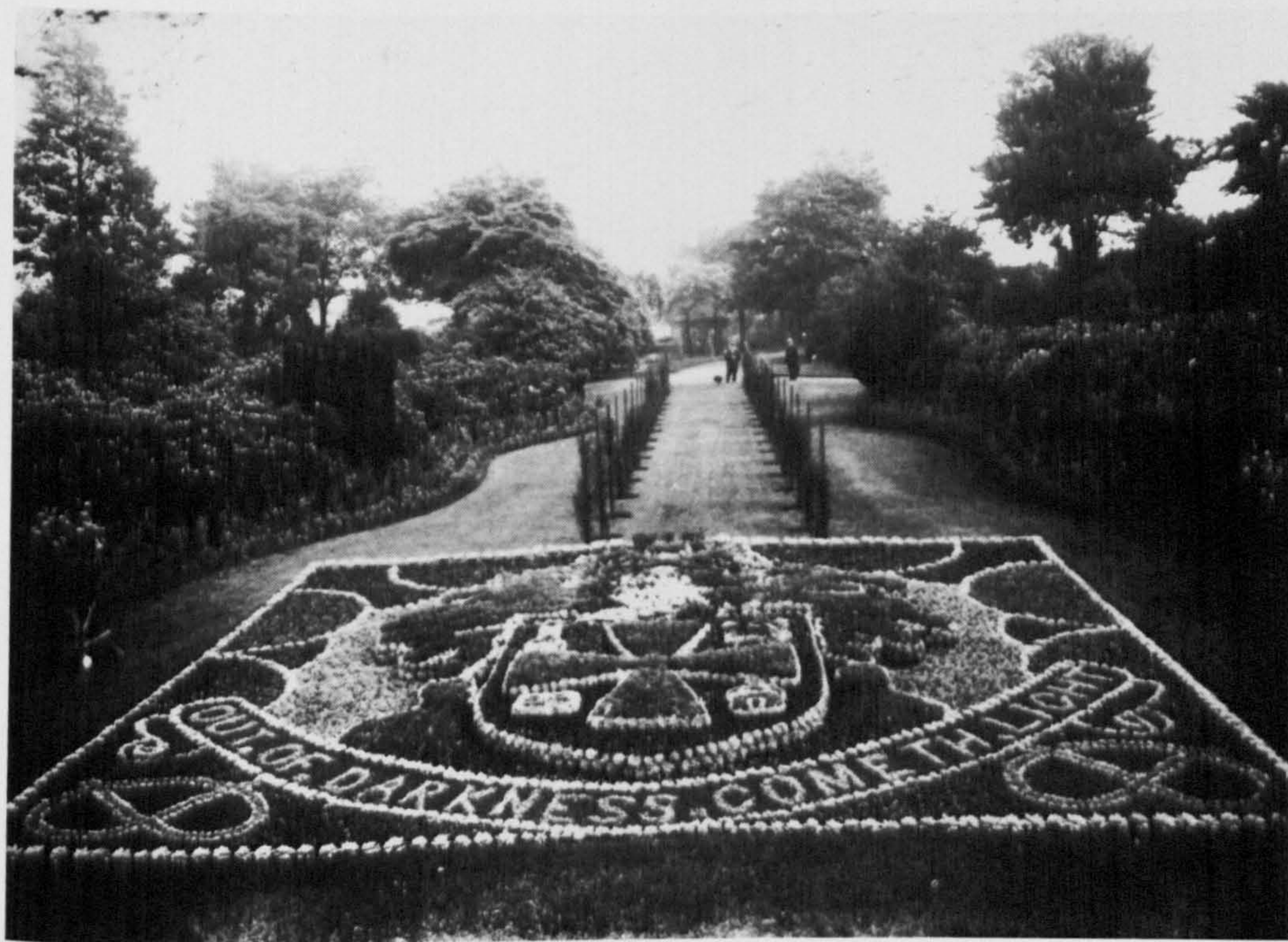


Figure 83 Commemorative planting for the coronation of George V, 1911  
West Park, Wolverhampton (Wolverhampton Borough Council)

Figure 84 Carpet-bedding in the form of the municipal coat-of-arms,  
West Park, Wolverhampton (Ibid)



Opposite page:

Figure 82 Diagrams illustrating the carpet-bedding at Battersea Park  
with details of plants, 1870  
(Gardeners' Chronicle, 27 August 1870, p.1158)



horticulture" to be regarded "with a distaste almost amounting to abhorrence".<sup>41</sup>

Carpet-bedding should not be seen as a nineteenth-century innovation but rather as a revival with roots that can be traced back to the seventeenth-century and to Tudor parterres. Among the most vociferous critics of carpet-bedding and the planting practised in municipal parks in general was Gertrude Jekyll. She thought that municipal parks were "not only unbeautiful" but gave an impression of "hopeless dreariness". In planting it seemed to be a good bargain to accept a nurseryman's contract rather than to take trouble to consider what was really needed. Formal flower beds, she argued, could be less costly and would look much better if there was an:

informal edging of small shrubs, such as Andromeda, Skimmia, Alpine rhododendron or berberis with spaces left for lilies or cannas. Let anyone think of the beauty and dignity of this, and its appearance of permanence, in comparison with the garish monotony for a bare twelve weeks of a bed of Jacoby Geraniums.<sup>42</sup>

The type of gardening advocated by Gertrude Jekyll did not rely on bedding plants since 'most plants were in position permanently, rather than being planted just before they were due to flower and lifted once their flowering season was over. The results of this quite different system of gardening were more subtle and less dramatic in terms of floral display but not necessarily more expensive in upkeep either from the point of view of labour or nursery costs.

Another major critic of carpet-bedding because of the monotony, garishness and costs, was William Robinson.<sup>43</sup> What was needed were "a few hardy trees, a patch of green sward, and a spread of gravel to act as a playground for children ..."<sup>44</sup> It was William Robinson who introduced the main innovatory feature of Victorian gardening, the wild garden, which had little or no historic precedent. In the wild garden were foxgloves and other wild plants which were suited to particular locations and, as a result, the range of plants available to the designer was broadened. The wild garden was not, however, to become a feature of municipal parks except in the very limited sense of naturalising spring bulbs in grass in those areas where they were unlikely to be walked on.<sup>45</sup> Nor were



Gertrude Jekyll's ideas on planting influential in the parks except perhaps in the limited development of the herbaceous border.<sup>46</sup> The reasons for the continued use of carpet-bedding related to the ways in which the tastes of the park visitors were perceived.

Experience goes to prove that the vast majority of visitors are more impressed by spectacular effects than by the individual beauty or interest of the plants producing them.<sup>47</sup>

### Park Legislation and Municipal Activity

At the beginning of the 1870s two further Acts were passed by Parliament, the Public Parks, Schools and Museums Act 1871<sup>48</sup> and the Parks Regulation Act 1872.<sup>49</sup> The first of these Acts, the Public Parks, Schools and Museums Act 1871 was intended to promote gifts of land for public parks, elementary schools or public museums. Under the terms of the 1859 Recreation Grounds Act property of a maximum value of £1,000 could be bequeathed for the purpose of providing parks and recreation grounds. The 1871 Act extended this to include gifts of land for schools and museums but it also limited the amount of land that could be donated to twenty acres for any one public park, two acres for a museum and one acre for a school house. The effectiveness of this Act in stimulating the donation of land for parks was not however as great as that of the earlier 1859 Act, and Appendix IV shows that the role of the benefactor in donating parks continued steadily between 1860 and circa 1885 but did not accelerate. The Parks Regulation Act 1872 applied to all royal parks and gardens and it laid down the powers, duties and responsibilities of park-keepers of those parks. These were identical to those of the police of the district in which the park was situated. The Act also listed the maximum penalties for particular offences.<sup>50</sup> Before the Act was passed there was discussion on whether the right of public meeting would be included in it.<sup>51</sup> The Act did not specifically prohibit public meetings in royal parks but the discussion reminds us that in the early 1870s public meetings were still regarded as a potential threat.

Between 1845 and 1875 park development increased steadily, but it is after 1875 that a substantial increase in activity is seen (Table 2, p.241). Undoubtedly the main stimulus to park provision came as a result of the passing of the Public Health Act 1875.<sup>52</sup> Under this Act for the first time central government loans could be raised with the sanction of the



Local Government Board for the purpose of acquiring land for recreation, or for any permanent improvement in connection with such land. This Act also gave urban authorities power "to contribute to the support of public walks or pleasure grounds provided by any person".<sup>53</sup> It was the first major statutory provision to enable urban authorities to acquire land for recreation, and its effectiveness can be judged from the annual reports from the Commissioners of Local Government Boards from 1874 onwards. These show the steadily increasing number of applications in the following decade (see Appendix VIII).

Table 4

Applications for Improvements relating to municipal parks

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Applications</u>
1874	2
1875	3
1876	4
1877	5
1878	8
1879	6
1880	10
1881	11
1882	9
1883/4	10

By 1890 the number of applications for loans had risen to twenty-five per annum. Some towns would make several applications in one year, with different terms of repayment for each loan. Keighley for example requested four loans in 1890 for 10, 20, 30 and 50 years respectively.

The Public Health Act also gave urban authorities the right to make bye-laws, and the right to remove any person infringing those bye-laws. Penalties not exceeding £5 for each offence or 40/- per day could be imposed.<sup>54</sup> Those powers followed similar powers granted by local and private Acts during the years preceding 1875.

Under the 1875 Act land acquired by an urban authority for the purpose of open space for recreation could not be used for other and inconsistent purposes. For example, municipal offices could not be built on it but a museum, a conservatory and a free library could be built upon it as they were thought to be "conducive to the better enjoyment of the park".<sup>55</sup>



The Act therefore confirmed the educational role of parks. The Courts were also quite strict in inhibiting admission charges to public open spaces even on certain days and special occasions and it was probably for this reason that the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 gave local authorities special powers of charging on a limited number of days.<sup>56</sup> It was thought that land acquired for public parks under the Public Health Act 1875, s.164 would be exempt from rates but this was not established in law until the Brockwell Park case, 1897.<sup>57</sup> This case established that there was no liability for rates because the County Council were incapable, by law, of using the park for any profitable purpose and they had to allow the public free and unrestricted use of it. The importance of the 1875 Act lay in the powers it gave to urban authorities to raise loans for the purpose of acquiring land for recreation and the period after 1875 marks the general expansion of municipal activity regarding parks.

With this expansion, parks were developed increasingly in towns other than those associated with major industrial and commercial activities. In resort towns, parks were seen as part of the amenities which could attract visitors to the town rather than as oases of fresh air and places for physical, moral and social regeneration of working people. When Victoria Park was developed in Bath in 1830 it was seen as adding to the attractions of the resort. With the development of Preston Park, Brighton some fifty years later, similar arguments were put forward: "...it behoved the inhabitants of Brighton to keep up its attractions and character for purity". Brighton was by the mid-1870s among the most densely-populated towns in England but, when the question of acquiring a park was brought before the Town Council in 1876, opinion was divided. As Brighton was a pleasure resort some thought it should not be compared with large industrial towns with similar populations. The whole venture was unnecessary, the people of Prestonville, the proposed site for the park, had "no desire for a park", and the cost would be ruinous, although "doubtless ... of great benefit to a few individuals ... owning and occupying property in that neighbourhood".<sup>58</sup> Preston Park was opened in 1884 and within a couple of years the activities catered for included cricket, tennis, bowling and cycling.

### Park Facilities

The introduction of palm houses and bandstands was evidence of the



expansion of park facilities that occurred in this period. Increasing facilities also occurred in the area of sports, as the inclusion of tennis and cycling in Preston Park, Brighton showed. In Albert Park, Middlesbrough there was boating, cricket, archery, bowling, croquet and a maze,<sup>59</sup> a similar range of activities to those offered in the parks in the 1840s and 1850s. However, in Battersea Park, London there were by 1898, according to the season, facilities for cricket, football, skating, tennis, riding, gymnasia for adults and children, quoits, bowling and cycling.<sup>60</sup> Victoria Park, London contained in 1898 thirty cricket pitches, thirty-seven free tennis courts, four gymnasia and the swimming pool.<sup>61</sup> The range of sports offered in these parks in this period was therefore wider than those available in the 1840s and 1850s and women could participate in activities such as tennis and cycling. However, the differentiation of sports facilities in terms of class and sex evident in the earlier periods tended to continue. Tennis, for example, was played by middle class men and women, and Figure 85 indicates that the cycling in Battersea Park was an activity for middle class rather than for working class women.

Animals were another new attraction featured in the parks in this period. André included a bird park and a deer park in his design for Sefton Park, while Victoria Park featured an aviary, guinea pigs, goats on a rockery, and a deer enclosure.<sup>62</sup> As well as providing an attraction for the younger age groups, they also had an educational function. The latter part of the nineteenth-century and early part of the twentieth-century also saw the introduction of sand-pits and paddling pools, thereby extending park facilities to very young children.

### Conclusion

The most significant legislation with regard to promoting park development in this period was the Public Health Act 1875. This Act gave local authorities the right, for the first time, to raise a government loan for the purposes of acquiring land for recreation. Appendix IV shows that local authorities did not immediately take advantage of its provisions, but that from 1880 onwards a marked general expansion in municipal activity occurs. Indeed, "the mania for parks"<sup>63</sup> could more appropriately be applied to that period than to the mid-1860s. As a result of this expansion, municipal parks were increasingly developed in centres not primarily associated with industrial or commercial activity.



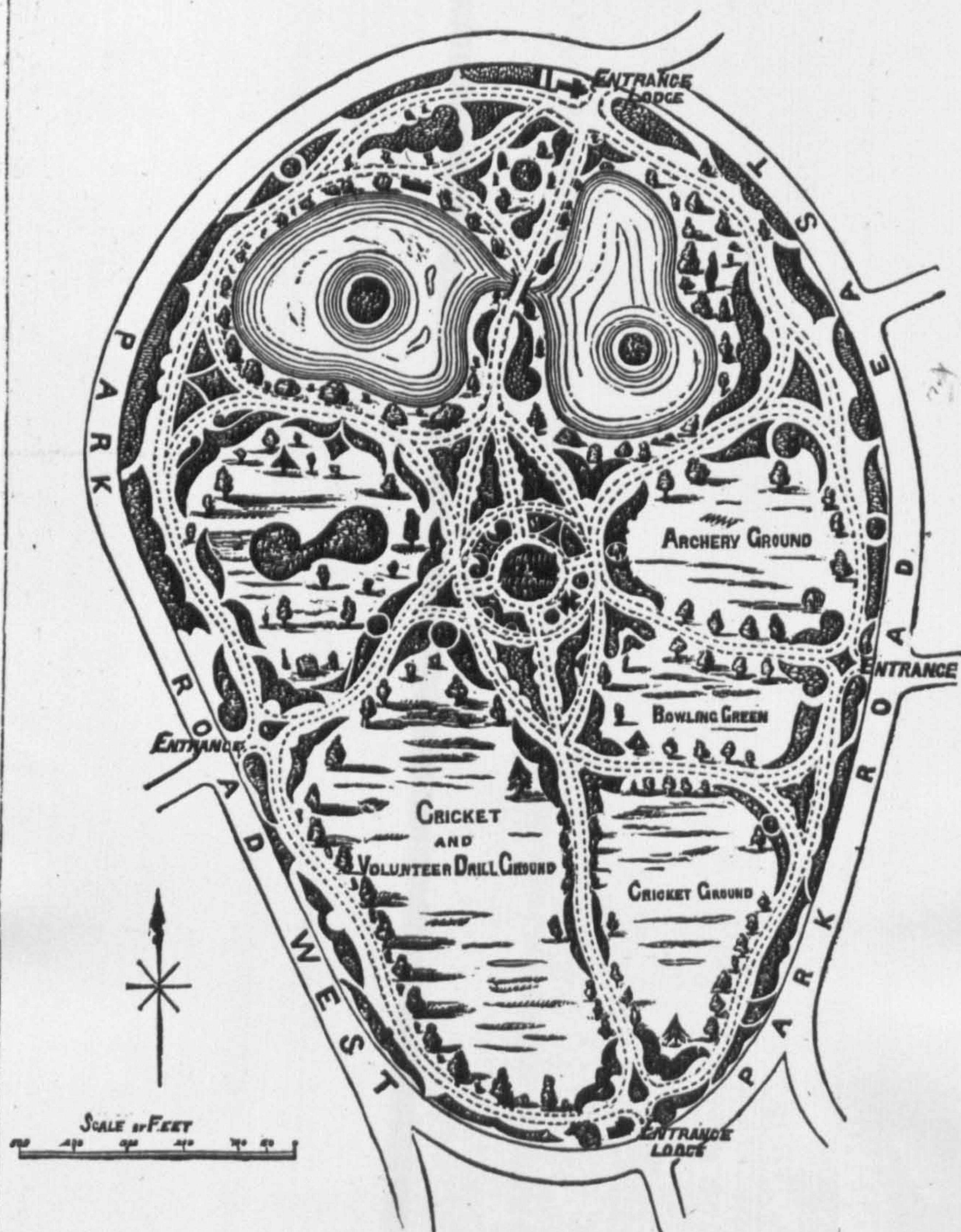


Figure 85    Cycling in Battersea Park c.1898    (Sexby, op.cit. p.17)



# FIRST PRIZE DESIGN

FOR  
THE NEW PARK, WOLVERHAMPTON, FIFTY ACRES IN EXTENT.



Birmingham, June, 1879.

R. H. VERTEGANS, F.R.H.S., Chad Valley Nurseries.

Figure 86 West Park, Wolverhampton (designed R.H. Vertegans)  
(Wolverhampton Borough Council)



The development of Preston Park, Brighton indicated that parks in resorts were clearly seen as part of the amenities of the town, just as they had been nearly half a century earlier when Bath developed Victoria Park.

In addition to the increased activity in park development, the range of facilities available in the parks expanded. Tennis and cycling, birds and animals, sand-pits and paddling pools, offered new opportunities for enjoyment in addition to the more traditional sports and those associated with the enjoyment of the plants and trees. The development of the Liverpool parks between 1862 and 1872 provided an example of the interrelationship between parks and town planning, for the location of these parks in a ring around the city introduced green spaces at approximately regular intervals. At the time that they were developed, they were on the outskirts of the city. In effect, therefore, such parks could also be seen as an aspect of suburban development. The introduction at Sefton Park of French park design, by Edouard André, represented a new development which proved to be influential on later park design. The ellipses and sections of circles which were a feature of Sefton Park divided the park into a number of areas. Similar features are seen in the plan of West Park, Wolverhampton (Figure 86) and in the plan for Abbey Park, Leicester (Figure 87).

The inclusion of large-scale buildings such as conservatories and palm houses marked another difference between park architecture and design in the period 1845-65 and in this later period. Such buildings extended the use of the park in bad weather and also provided an opportunity for extending the range of plants grown. Bandstands were also a feature of this later phase of park development. It was in this later period that carpet-bedding and commemorative planting developed as a popular feature in the parks, despite criticisms of this mode of planting. Commemorative planting in particular provided local authorities with the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty or local pride, and thereby reinforced the dominant ideology. Music in the parks had always been a popular feature. In the early 1880s both palm houses and music in the parks were clearly seen as civilising and refining influences on the working classes. The attitude expressed did not differ significantly from that of the park promoters of the 1830s when the need for parks was first identified. It is evident therefore that, while parks were increasing in number and their facilities were expanding, and so enabling more people, wider age





FIG. 37.—PLAN FOR THE PUBLIC PARK AT LEICESTER. (SEE P. 172.)

Figure 87 Abbey Park, Leicester 1882, plan (Leicester Records Office)



groups, and more women, actively to enjoy them, their social and political role was not forgotten.



## Notes and References

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Cited by Ashworth, op.cit. p.63
- 2 The Builder, Vol. 8, No. 405, 9 November 1950, p.532.  
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- 3 Liverpool Council (LC) Proceedings, 1863, p.252  
Cited in Roberts, op.cit. p.67
- 4 Picton, J.A. Memorials of Liverpool, Vol. 2, London, 1875, p.430
- 5 White, B.D. A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914,  
Liverpool, 1951, p.84
- 6 LC Proceedings, 1864, p.131. Cited in Roberts, op.cit. p.66
- 7 28 Vict. c.20, s.114
- 8 LC Proceedings, 1868-9. Report of Town Clerk on Newsham Park,  
pp.47-8
- 9 LC Proceedings, 1867-8. Improvements Committee Meeting,  
30 December 1868, p.619
- 10 Liverpool Review, 28 June 1890, p.9
- 11 "Opening of Stanley Park", Porcupine, Vol. 12, 1870, pp.76-7
- 12 Picton, op.cit. p.412
- 13 Millington, R. The House in the Park, Corporation of the City  
of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1957, p.74  
Henry Yates Thompson was the eldest son of Samuel Thompson,  
partner in the banking house of Arthur Heywood & Co. He was  
thought to have inherited most of the £2 million fortune left  
by his father.
- 14 Dolman, F. Municipalities at Work, London, 1895, p.46
- 15 LC Proceedings, 1868-9, Report on Sefton Park, April 1867, p.637
- 16 The Builder, Vol. 25, No. 1281, 24 August 1867, p.625
- 17 The Builder, Vol. 30, No. 1530, 1 June 1872, p.417
- 18 The other figures were John Parkinson, apothecary to James I,  
André Le Nôtre, the French landscape gardener, Prince Henry and  
Mercator. (Hope, E.W. City of Liverpool Handbook, Liverpool, 1903,  
p.31)
- 19 Hope, op.cit. p.30
- 20 The Builder, Vol. 25, No. 1281, op.cit. p.625



- 21 Wolverhampton West Park 1881-1981, Wolverhampton Borough Council, 1981, unpaginated
- 22 Goreham, G. The Parks and Open Spaces of Norwich, Norwich, 1961, p.32
- 23 Jevons, W.S. Methods of Social Reform, London 1883, 1904 edition, p.11
- 24 Ibid. p.2
- 25 Ibid. p.12
- 26 Ibid. p.8
- 27 Blomfield, R. "Of Public Space, Parks and Gardens" in Cobden-Sanderson, T.J., Lethaby, W.R., et al. Art and Life and the Building and Decoration of Cities, Lectures delivered at the fifth exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, London, 1897, pp.203-4
- 28 Jekyll, G. Public Parks and Gardens, Bromley, 1918, p.9.  
Gertrude Jekyll, a major figure in gardening history, created some 350 gardens, many of them in conjunction with houses designed by the architect Edwin Lutyens. She advocated variety in planting, with plants juxtaposed in order to bring out the harmony and contrast of colour, form, and foliage, in broad sweeps.  
(Jekyll, F. Gertrude Jekyll: a Memoir, London, 1934)
- 29 Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, 29 May 1878, p.3
- 30 Lillie, W. History of Middlesborough, Middlesborough Borough Council, 1968, p.231
- 31 Gardeners' Chronicle, 8 September 1864, p.843
- 32 Ibid. 15 September 1866, p.880
- 33 Ibid. 26 August 1871, p.1106
- 34 Ibid. Battersea Parks, 3 September 1864, pp.843-4  
10 September 1864, p.867
- 35 McKenzie, A. Private Notebook, entry for 17 May 1871, Guildhall Library MS 16,861.  
This notebook was discovered at a very late stage of this research.  
For further details see Appendix VI
- 36 Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, op.cit. p.3
- 37 Dent, op.cit. p.232
- 38 Wolverhampton West Park 1881-1981, op.cit.
- 39 Lillie, op.cit. p.232
- 40 According to the Department of Recreation, City of Edinburgh, this idea was first conceived in 1903 by the park superintendent J.M. McHattie. Andrew Marvell described a floral clock in The Skillful Gardener,



1768. (I am indebted to C. Wainwright, Furniture Department, Victoria and Albert Museum for access to correspondence on this point)

41 Pettigrew, op.cit. p.173

42 Jekyll, op.cit. p.9

43 William Robinson's importance to gardening came mainly from his writings. In particular, The Wild Garden, London, 1870 and The English Flower Garden, London, 1898.

44 Robinson, W. The Parks, Promenades and Gardens of Paris, London, 1869, p.xx

45 Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. p.248

46 Ibid.

47 Pettigrew, op.cit. p.171

48 34 Vict. c.13

49 35 & 36 Vict. c.15

50 Violation of regulations: maximum £5  
Assaults on park-keepers: maximum £20 or imprisonment with or without hard-labour, maximum 6 months. Ibid.

51 Gardeners' Chronicle, 9 March 1872, p.31

52 38 & 39 Vict. c.55

53 The local authorities not empowered to acquire and manage land for the purposes of recreation under this Act were the County Councils and the Metropolitan Boroughs. This omission was made good in the Open Spaces Act 1906 (6 Edward VII, c.25)

54 38 & 39 Vict. c.55. s.183. Under the Local Government Act 1894 the powers exercised by an urban authority were extended to Parish Councils.

55 Attorney-General v Corporation of Sunderland, 1876.  
L.R. 2 Ch. Div. 634 (cited in Hunter and Birkett, p.19)

56 53 & 54 Vict. c.59

Under this Act, which was an Adoptive Act, certain further powers relating to the management of land acquired for recreation purposes were obtained by Urban and Rural Councils. These were:

1 Power to make byelaws to prevent danger from whirligigs and swings driven by steam power (s.38)

2 Power to erect statues and monuments in streets or public places (s.42)

3 Power to plant trees in highways (s.43)



- 4 Power to close any park or pleasure grounds to the public and to grant its use to any public charity or institution, or for any agricultural, horticultural, or other show or any other public purpose: in this case money may be charged for admission; but the power can only be exercised on twelve days in the year and not on more than four consecutive days and not on any Sunday or public holiday (s. 44 (1))
- 5 Power to let for hire, or to licence any person to let for hire boats in any water in a park or pleasure ground, and to make byelaws for the regulation of boating (s.44 (2))
- 57 Lambeth Overseers v L.C.C., 1897, A.C. 625; 36 Digest 247, 12. Roddis, op.cit. p.112
- 58 Brighton Herald, 9 September 1876
- 59 Lillie, op.cit. pp.228-9
- 60 Sexby, op.cit. p.15
- 61 Ibid. p.556
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 See footnote 4



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### NEW DIRECTIONS - NO MORE ORNAMENTAL WATERS AND DIRTY SWANS

In the late 1870s and early 1880s new directions in park development became apparent. Although the need to provide small parks and recreation grounds near to the populations they were to serve had been clearly identified in the early 1860s, it was not until the later 1870s that effective action occurred. The factors leading to this action will be identified and the significance of small open spaces to later developments will be evaluated. The development of parks and recreation grounds represented part of the wider efforts to improve urban conditions during the nineteenth-century. But in the last quarter of the century a change of emphasis occurs and, instead of efforts being directed towards the improvement of existing conditions in the urban environment, attention was increasingly drawn towards new developments away from existing cities and their problems. The ways in which the development of the Garden City and the ideas of socialism and the labour movement affected the relationship between parks and town planning belong properly to a detailed study of the 1880s and thereafter, and it is only possible to make brief references to them here.

The successful development of small parks and recreation grounds was due to two main factors, the efforts of certain reforming organisations and the movement to convert disused burial grounds and churchyards into usable open spaces for recreation. Among the main reforming organisations that contributed to the development of small open spaces were the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association for Diffusing Knowledge of the Laws of Health among the Inhabitants of Two Boroughs and Neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup> which was set up in 1852, the Kyrle Society<sup>2</sup> set up in 1875, and the Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association set up in 1882. The emphasis of the work of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association (MSSA) was initially, as its name implied, mainly on sanitation, but gradually these interests broadened to include housing, pollution and open spaces. An article "On the Necessity of Open Spaces in Large Towns", published in the Association's



Report of 1861,<sup>4</sup> indicated its concern with this particular topic and, in 1880, a separate organisation, The Committee for Securing Open Spaces, which was closely associated with the MSSA, was set up. The question of open spaces in large towns related closely to one of the two main ways in which the problems of towns were identified: overcrowding of people per room and per house; and overcrowding and non-existent planning of houses per acre.

The chairman of the Open Spaces Committee was Herbert Philips and, among its active members, was T.C. Horsfall. Thomas Coglan Horsfall is best known for his ideas on housing reform, town-extension plans and environmental reform, and it was from his writings on German methods of town planning and urban control that he first attracted wide attention.<sup>5</sup> Horsfall was convinced from his experience of the problems of Manchester that overcrowding of houses per acre was a much greater problem than the overcrowding per room of houses which were well lit because they were on wide streets.<sup>6</sup> Open spaces had an important role to play in any attempts to solve the problem of high housing density. At its first meeting, the Open Spaces Committee agreed:

That it is desirable that an effort be made to bring the question of Open Spaces prominently before the public, giving the movement, in the first instance, the direction of the provision of playgrounds for districts of the city thickly populated or likely soon to become so.<sup>7</sup>

Both the Open Spaces Committee and the MSSA exerted pressure on the Manchester City Council. The subjects of this pressure ranged from the general provision of open spaces and playgrounds to the opening of playgrounds in Board schools. The MSSA was also concerned that active measures should be taken to preserve open spaces in suburbs and that disused burial grounds be used as open spaces.

### Manchester

In 1876 the Manchester Parks and Cemeteries Committee was instructed by the Council to report on available vacant plots of land or open spaces in the city or suburbs, with a view to acquiring them and forming pleasure or recreation grounds.<sup>8</sup> The Committee decided that they should identify which areas of the city most needed such spaces



and in what districts such spaces were available. But before they did this they wished to find out what other large towns had done to acquire recreation grounds in densely inhabited locations. In the replies to their letters they found that Liverpool, Leeds and the City of London had not provided any such spaces: Glasgow was forming such spaces in connection with other city improvements, but these were not intended for the recreation of the inhabitants but more "with a view to securing air space in densely inhabited localities". Bristol's reply evaded the point by sending details of the 1861 Act which had secured Clifton and Durdham Downs "as a place of public resort". Birmingham replied that they were well supplied with parks but they were all in the outlying parts of the borough.

The great want felt here, is open spaces of land situate in the centre of the most thickly populated parts of the borough, and easily accessible to the people.<sup>9</sup>

The Corporation of Birmingham had received a gift of four or five acres, which was surrounded by a large population (Burbury Street Recreation Ground, 4 acres, 1877) and had recently purchased nine acres in another densely populated part of town (Highgate Park).<sup>10</sup> These replies were not very helpful.

The MSSA had suggested that the Committee should consider using existing school playgrounds and an experiment lasting twelve months was carried out in 1877-8 in conjunction with the Domestic Mission School in Embden Street, Greenheys.<sup>11</sup> In that experiment the school lent the ground attached to it (1813 square yards) as a public playground under the supervision of the Corporation who provided seats, swings, poles and other apparatus, and planted shrubs. At first the experiment was a success but, according to letters from the Domestic Mission Committee, that state of affairs did not last and "lending out ground has practically meant inviting and submitting to the roughest and idlest rascals of the district".<sup>12</sup> Both scholars and staff were affected and children and girls who would otherwise have used the ground "are driven off and deterred by these invaders". Part of the problem, wrote the Mission, was that the site did not fall within the jurisdiction of the police so they took no action, although they did insist on closing the gates to the park just when they needed to be open for evening classes! The Domestic Mission Committee thought that



if the ground were properly supervised it could be a success, but it should only be used by young people or those who wished to come and sit in it in summer time. Young men and others, they thought, should go further afield to one of the parks. Finally, the Domestic Mission Committee put up a placard "playground closed" and only allowed children of the district to use it, by leave, when it was convenient for the Mission to open it. They also asked for the head gardener from Queen's Park to remove the benches which were not wanted "and only challenge the mob of ruffians to violence and damage".<sup>13</sup>

After this discouraging experience, it was some four years before the question of opening school playgrounds to the public received further attention. In 1882 the Manchester School Board wrote to the Mayor that they were considering opening certain playgrounds on three evenings per week, for two hours, during the summer months and asked if the Corporation would agree to arrange efficient police supervision without cost to the Board.<sup>14</sup> This the Corporation declined.<sup>15</sup> In 1883 the MSSA took up the question of playgrounds in schools and sent a memorandum to the Mayor.<sup>16</sup> This was followed by a conference held in Manchester on 26 February 1884 on the subject of recreation grounds in towns. At this conference Lord Brabazon, President of the Metropolitan Garden, Boulevard and Playground Association gave an address, and £10,000 was promised to the Corporation towards the cost of providing playgrounds.<sup>17</sup> Meetings were held in London with a view to persuading the Government to set up a Royal Commission to look into the question of physical training for the young and a pamphlet was circulated to Members of Parliament entitled Parks and Playgrounds for the People. This pamphlet referred to the terms of the 1845 Enclosure Act in which enclosures of commons and wasteland had to set aside land for recreation, in proportion to the size of population of the town. The pamphlet proposed that in future this idea should be extended to all lands laid out for building purposes, and that in all new developments of towns and suburbs open spaces for recreation should be preserved so that no inhabitant would be further than one mile from a recreation ground. But unfortunately the interest of Parliament could not be aroused.<sup>18</sup>

In 1885 Herbert Philips, Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee, led a successful deputation to the Manchester Watch Committee for the use of school playgrounds out of school hours and as a result a number of



school playgrounds were opened.<sup>19</sup>

While these efforts regarding school playgrounds were being pursued, the Parks and Cemeteries Committee's efforts to secure open spaces for recreation were also achieving success. By 1884 five such sites had been acquired and in addition the Trustees of the Infirmary agreed to allow the Committee to take charge of a strip of land between the Infirmary and Portland Street (850 square yards). This the Committee would plant with shrubs and flowers, so that it would provide a bright spot in the heart of the city. If in the future the Infirmary wished to reclaim it, this could be done at short notice.

The five sites acquired by the Committee were the result of advertisements for offers of plots of suitable land. Fifty sites had been offered and the five selected were:

Mount Street	4941 sq. yards	presented by the Improvement Committee
Churnett Street	6773 "	presented by the Watch Committee
Butler Street	1100 "	presented by the Waterworks Committee
(on condition that it reverted back if necessary)		
Prussia Street	3620 sq. yards	purchased for £12,000
Queen Street	701 "	purchased for £582 13s 9d <sup>20</sup>

These sites were equipped with seats by the Committee, but only the Prussia Street site was provided with a gymnasium (i.e. swings and seesaws) and a ball-court (Figure 88). In 1884 on average 4700 people used it per week.<sup>21</sup> Later a recreation ground in Mount Street included sand for infants, children's swingboats, seesaws, separate swings for boys and girls, gymnastic apparatus for adults, skittle and quoit grounds, shelters and a drinking fountain. This was handed over to the Corporation in 1890, but it is not clear whether it was the same site as that presented by the Improvement Committee.<sup>22</sup>

Manchester City Council's attitude towards open space circa 1884 was that they were fully aware of the need and were "unceasing in their efforts ... having due regard to cost", but they saw their main duty in the expenditure of public money as that of seeing that it provided as large a yield as possible.<sup>23</sup>



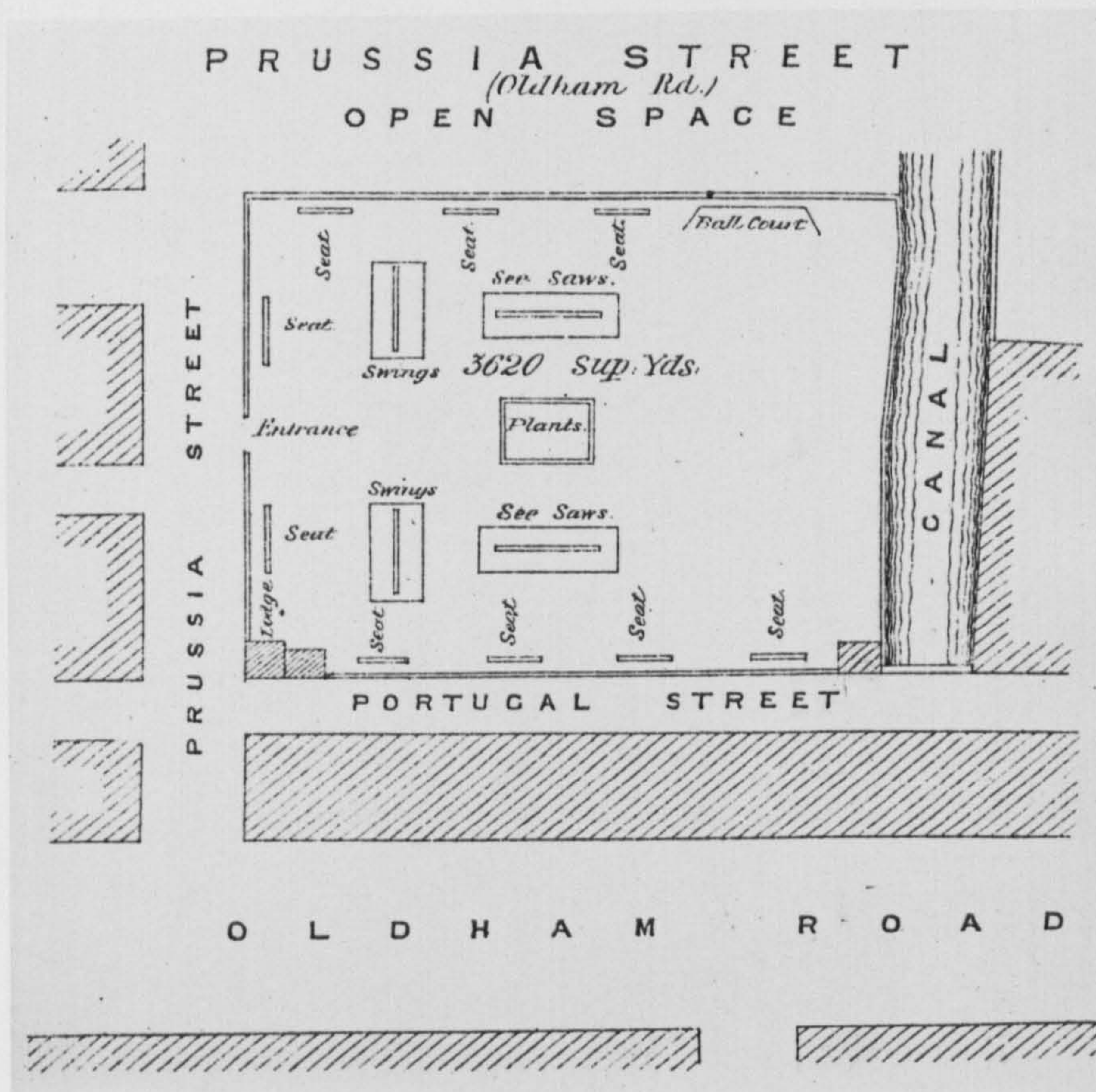


Figure 88 Prussia Street Recreation Ground, Manchester, 1884  
(MCC Proceedings, 1884)



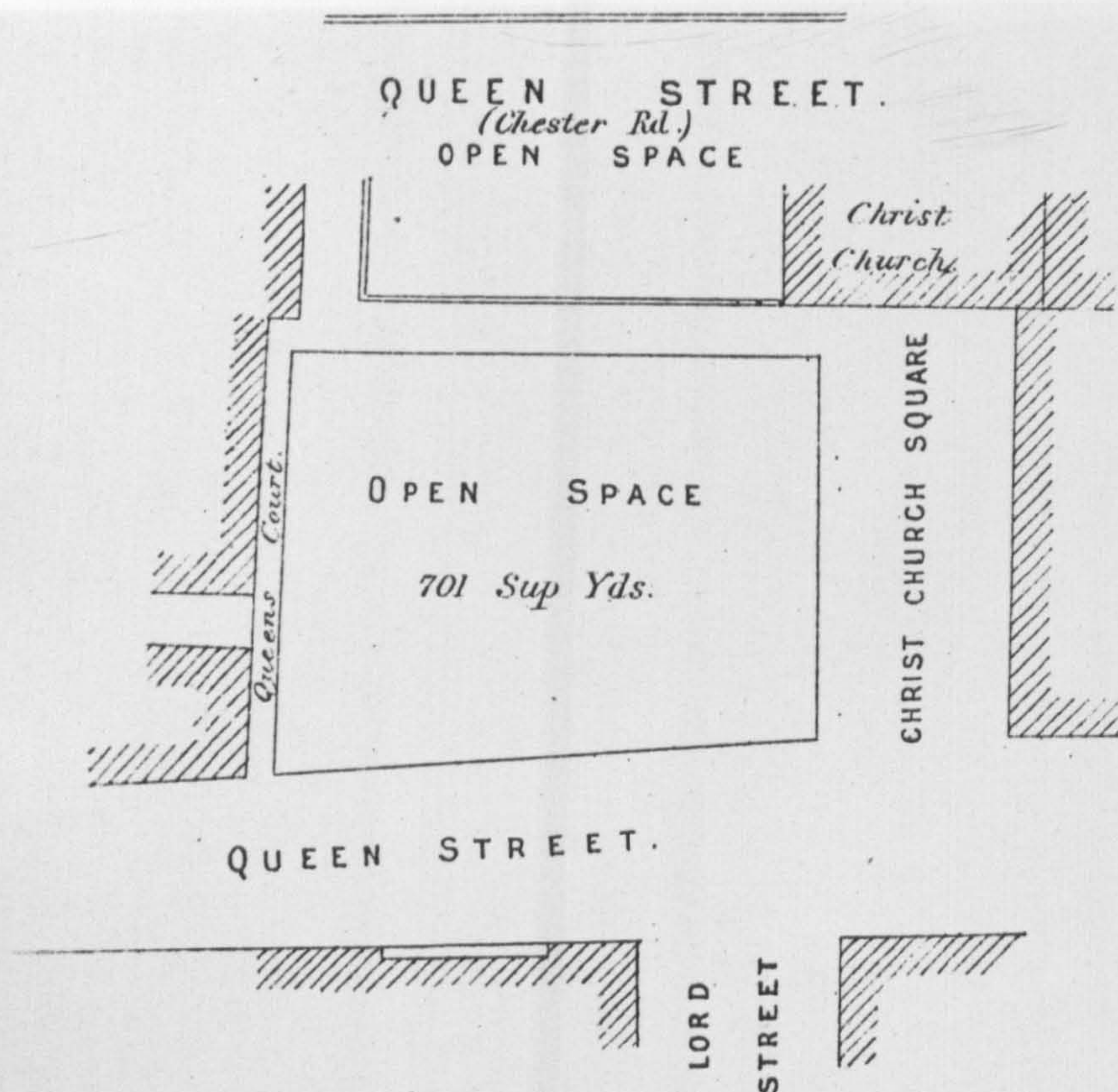


Figure 89 Queen Street Open Space, Manchester, 1884  
(MCC Proceedings, 1884)



The Parks and Cemeteries Committee's attitude was similar: if land was offered on reasonable terms they would consider it but, in general, the price prohibited extensive purchases and they did not consider that the present was a suitable time for increasing the burden of the rates. Wistfully they contrasted the original purchase of Queen's and Philips Parks with the present situation "when the only donors are the departments of the Corporation itself".<sup>24</sup>

The acquisition of these sites in 1884 marked the beginning of a more intensive phase of activity by the Parks and Cemeteries Committee and over the following decade the following parks were acquired and opened:

1885	Birch Fields
1885	Cheetham Park
1893	Gorton Park
1894	Crumpsall Park
1894	Boggart Hole Clough

These acquisitions took place alongside the growing awareness of the need for small local open spaces for recreation.

It is evident that, during the late 1870s and early 1880s, increasing efforts were made in Manchester to provide small spaces for recreation grounds, but the main factor inhibiting their development was that of cost. The role of such sites was seen largely in terms of providing opportunities for play and exercise for young people, as the range of equipment indicated. In addition, certain spaces could be used for adults to sit in, but it is not certain how the use of such a space as the Queen Street site was envisaged, for this, in 1884, did not even contain seats but consisted just of fenced and levelled ground. (Figure 89).

#### Disused Burial Grounds

The other major factor contributing to the development of small open spaces for recreation in the 1880s was the movement to transform disused burial grounds into public open spaces and gardens. Overcrowding in churchyards and burial grounds had occurred before the nineteenth-century but the scale of the problem had increased dramatically with the growth of urban populations. During the 1830s



and 1840s the movement to establish cemeteries outside the boundaries of the major cities grew. These were run on a commercial basis which was found to be not entirely satisfactory. During the early 1850s, a number of Acts of Parliament were passed which effectively gave municipal authorities the responsibility for running cemeteries but local authorities could and did pass local Acts to deal with the problem. For example, Coventry opened a municipal cemetery in 1847. This was designed by Joseph Paxton.<sup>25</sup> The Burial Act 1852<sup>26</sup> related only to London and this was amended by the Burial Act 1853<sup>27</sup> which applied to the whole of the country. Under the 1853 Act churchyards could be closed by Order in Council and new grounds that would be a danger to health prohibited. One of the earliest municipal burial grounds to be formed as a result of this legislation was the Rochdale Cemetery, 1853.<sup>28</sup>

As a result of this legislation, 541 consecrated burial grounds were closed during 1854-5.<sup>29</sup> No provisions were made in those Acts for the maintenance of closed burial grounds and in 1876 the nuisance arising from those that were not cared for led to proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts. As a result the rector and churchwardens of St George's-in-the-East, London, were granted a facility which in effect converted the churchyard into a garden.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, according to the author of London Parks and Gardens, 1907, St George's became one of the best arranged of the East End churchyards. The tombstones were placed against the wall or left standing, if they were not in the way. In the centre was an obelisk to a benefactress of the parish, Mrs Raine, who had died in 1725. There was also a nature study museum in the garden and a special plot of ground which was tended by pupils.<sup>31</sup>

In 1874 a return was made to Parliament of the situation regarding churchyards. The figures for England and Wales showed that 9,989 churchyards remained open and 794 had closed.<sup>32</sup> The following year a further return was made to Parliament in which the numbers of churchyards closed was broken down into towns. In Manchester, twenty-one churchyards were closed completely and five partially, and of the twenty-six closures or part-closures, fourteen had been closed in 1854-5. In Liverpool there were no closures and in Birmingham there were nine.<sup>33</sup>



In landscape gardening terms, the link between the design of parks and that of cemeteries and burial grounds was a close one. Major figures, such as J.C. Loudon, Joseph Paxton and Edward Kemp, worked in both areas.<sup>34</sup> But it is in the transformation of closed churchyards and burial grounds into public open spaces that the relationship to the development of the municipal park and recreation ground becomes even more direct. The process of this transformation was, however, a slow one both physically and legally and it was not until the 1880s that general Acts were passed which made provision for the future use of closed burial grounds and their conversion into public open spaces and gardens. The Open Spaces Act 1881<sup>35</sup> gave facilities for the transfer of disused burial grounds to local authorities with a view to their use as public gardens and the Disused Burial Grounds Act 1884<sup>36</sup> prohibited all building on such places. The Metropolitan Board of Works (Various Powers) Act 1885<sup>37</sup> gave the Metropolitan Board powers to enforce the provisions of the Disused Burial Grounds Act. An earlier Act, The Metropolitan Open Spaces Act 1877<sup>38</sup> which applied to London only, gave the Metropolitan Board of Works the power to convert churchyards and make them available to the public.

The main impetus to the development of public open spaces from disused burial grounds in London came from the work of the Kyrle Society, set up in 1875, and the Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association, set up in 1882. The Kyrle Society was founded by Miranda Hill, with Octavia Hill as treasurer, as a society "for the diffusion of beauty".<sup>39</sup> Its aim was to bring beauty into the lives of working people by such activities as planting trees, establishing choirs, controlling smoke, and collecting flowers for poor households, rather than by trying to overcome poverty.<sup>40</sup> In 1879 the Kyrle Society set up a sub-committee to promote open spaces by working with local authorities in London, and with the Commons Preservation Society, to increase available open spaces and preserve those that were threatened.<sup>41</sup> The Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association was set up by Lord Brabazon who proposed that the open spaces branches of the Kyrle Society and the National Health Society should combine.<sup>42</sup> This the National Health Society agreed to and the chairman of that society, Ernest Hart, became the first vice-chairman of the new Association.<sup>43</sup> Octavia Hill would not, however, agree to the proposal.<sup>44</sup> In 1885 the Association changed its name to



the rather more manageable Metropolitan Public Gardens Association.<sup>45</sup>

Lord Brabazon was particularly concerned with the question of the physical condition of the urban population. Rural inhabitants, and the wealthy who pursued outdoor activities, were he thought generally healthy, but the health of working people who lived in towns was deteriorating. Playgrounds, parks and country holidays could do much to improve health. The Association worked closely with the Kyrle Society and with the CPS and it aimed to provide:

breathing and resting places for the old,  
and playgrounds for the young in the midst  
of densely populated localities; especially<sup>46</sup>  
in the East and South of London.

The Association felt that everything that concerned the health and physical well-being of people should be its concern and thus among its objectives it included the provision of gymnasia in Board schools, the opening of school playgrounds outside school hours, the planting of trees and placing of seats in the wider streets, and the erection of baths, wash-houses and swimming baths. Its objectives were thus very similar to those of the MSSA.

The Association planned to acquire not only disused burial grounds but also waste places and enclosed squares. Then it would lay them out either as gardens mainly for adults, with benches, grass and flowers, or as combined gardens and playgrounds which would cater for children and would have "broad stretches of concrete pavement, interspersed with shrubs, and trees, and grass, and seats"; or as children's playgrounds. In the case of the latter, the Association recommended that "an intelligent man" should watch over the ground and be able to instruct children in simple gymnastics. Once established, the grounds would be handed over to the local public authority.<sup>47</sup>

In its first report, published in 1883, the Association summarised its achievements since its inauguration the previous year. These included tree planting in Mile End Road, providing gymnasia to a London Board school, opening a further seven acres of Regent's Park to the public, action to secure open spaces, as well as the transformation of disused burial grounds and churchyards into public gardens. The Report also included lists of trees, shrubs and climbing plants that



would live in London.<sup>48</sup> The Report listed forty-two churchyards and disused burial grounds which had been or were about to be laid out as public gardens and gave details of their size, the hours they were open, who owned the sites, the costs of laying out and maintenance, who was responsible for keeping order, and whether there were thoroughfares across the sites.<sup>49</sup> The sites ranged in size from 82 x 97 feet (the Chapel Royal (Savoy) Churchyard) to 7 acres (St John's Wood Chapel and Burial Ground, and St Pancras Burial Ground, St Pancras Road) but most of the sites were between one and two acres. At the St Pancras site the undulating ground had been levelled, some of the tombstones removed and the headstones placed in rows along the wall, or placed on rocky mounds. Straight asphalt walks were laid out and a monumental tablet recorded the opening of the gardens.<sup>50</sup>

Some of the comments on the sites complained about the visitors: "The conduct of children very bad at first, now improved, not yet perfect" (St Leonard's, Shoreditch) and in so doing neatly illustrated how the ability of parks and gardens to improve behaviour was still generally accepted in the 1880s. Others stressed how well the sites were appreciated: "... a pleasant sight, this well-kept garden, in a monotonous area of bricks and mortar" (St Mary's, Newington Butts); "A real boon: the visitors quiet, and deserving to be quiet, enjoy the repose they can get here" (St Mary's, Whitechapel). Sometimes too many people used the gardens and at St Botolph, Aldersgate Street, E.C., the gardener complained that so many people used the garden in the middle of the day in the summer that for three hours he could not work.<sup>51</sup>

In certain transformed burial grounds recreation areas were included although for some people the idea of "children romping about in the churchyards and turning somersaults on the graves, was too revolting and disagreeable to be entertained".<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, at St John's, Waterloo Bridge Road (one acre), in one corner of 30 x 90 yards were a swing, a giant stride (given by Lord Brabazon), parallel bars and a seesaw which had been given by the Association. The comment on these facilities was succinct: "This keeps the rest of the ground quiet for adults". The sites were kept in order by either caretakers, gardeners or the police and were generally open during the hours of daylight.<sup>53</sup>

The cemeteries which were in the worst state were often the private



unconsecrated ones, which initially were untouched by legislation. Victoria Park Cemetery was a private unconsecrated cemetery of nine and a half acres in a crowded area between Bethnel Green and Bow in the East End of London. In 1894 this was laid out and opened to the public as Meath Gardens by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. A large part of the area was laid out as gardens and there were two large playgrounds for girls and for boys containing seesaws, swings and gymnastic apparatus.<sup>54</sup>

The Association Report also listed Metropolitan Open Spaces which were for the use of the public including royal parks, enclosed and unenclosed commons, greens and playgrounds. Among the small open spaces opened to the public in recent years were Poplar Recreation Ground, 1867, two acres. This contained a children's playground to which a gymnasium had recently been added, but the area was also used by "old inhabitants". In Silver Street, London Docks, 1879,  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre, there was a playground with swings, some of them under cover, and a giant stride, as well as a skittle ground for men which was well used on summer evenings. St Luke's Parish Playground, Wentworth Street, Whitechapel, 1880, 1000 x 40 feet, was run by a woman caretaker who "maintains perfect order, though the neighbourhood is of the roughest".<sup>55</sup>

In Manchester the MSSA had recommended the use of disused burial grounds as open spaces to the Council and by 1884 the Parks and Cemeteries Committee had visited most of the sites in the city. But they thought that most of them were unsuitable for public use and, in their opinion, "the position of London is more favourable as regards this conversion than that of Manchester". No precise reasons for this opinion were given. The Committee had spent £5,000 out of the poor rate converting the disused burial ground at Angel Meadow into a public open space and they expressed themselves willing to plant trees in burial grounds if applications were made to them, but appeared rather loath to take any initiatives themselves in the matter.<sup>56</sup>

In Liverpool action to secure small open spaces for recreation dated from the late 1870s. When the opportunity to acquire the large eighteen acre site of Kensington Fields arose, The Liverpool Argus joined in the agitation:



We do not want ornamental waters and dirty swans.  
We want open spaces where our little ragamuffins  
can exercise their limbs and fashion themselves  
into healthy Englishmen.<sup>57</sup>

The first burial ground in Liverpool to be converted into a recreation ground was St Martin's Recreation Ground, 1878 (off Scotland Road), 1.75 acres. The Aubrey Street Recreation Ground, 1882, 1.5 acres, was created out of the site of a reservoir. Small gardens were also laid out; for example, Brow Side Gardens, 1884, 0.5 acres; St Luke's Garden, 1885, 1 acre; St Thomas's Gardens, 1885, 0.25 acres; and St Michael's Gardens, 1885, 1.25 acres.<sup>58</sup>

The development of small open spaces as recreation grounds and the transformation of churchyards and burial grounds into gardens did not add a very significant area to the space available for recreation, but the amenity value of such open spaces cannot be assessed in terms of acreage alone. To the aged and to the very young in particular, an accessible location is of far more significance than the scale of the open space available. The churchyards and burial grounds that were closed tended to be those that were surrounded by densely populated streets and the value of even a small open space to the people living nearby was thus of enormous significance.

The development of parks in conjunction with housing had resulted in an increase in value of the land surrounding the park, as has already been shown. The introduction of these small open spaces into districts of working class housing did not result in significant changes in the value of the residential land around them, nor were they designed in conjunction with housing. They were introduced where the opportunity occurred. Although many of these burial grounds had been grossly over-filled and often quite neglected, there was a difference between how they were treated and what people felt for them. Most people regarded such places with awe and reverence and the transformation of such sacrosanct places into parks and gardens represents a remarkable change in public opinion. In a purely practical sense, this development acknowledged that large parks did not provide accessible facilities for recreation except for the districts immediately adjacent to them. Large areas of working class districts were still, in the 1870s and 1880s, without such access and the introduction of those small open spaces went some way towards remedying this lack.



Figure 90 shows clearly the type of housing facing Newington Recreation Ground. By circa 1898 the bandstand formed an important feature of the 1.5 acre site as it did in the larger Wapping Recreation Ground (2.5 acres) (Figure 91). The gardens of terraced housing on two sides of this site adjoined the recreation ground but the boundary of the ground was planted with trees in order to form a visual screen. The recreation area was mainly gravelled and a fountain and two trees were set into circles of grass. Apart from the bandstand, the other main feature of this recreation ground was the gymnasium. The giant stride is just visible in the top left-hand corner.<sup>59</sup>

It is in this later period that the planned development of urban working class housing in conjunction with open space for recreation occurs. The work of the Open Spaces Committee and the MSSA indicates that the development of small open spaces in working class districts was by then part of the debate on working class housing. An indication of the contribution of small parks and recreation grounds to the planning of such housing can be seen in the first L.C.C. housing scheme at the Boundary Street Estate, Tower Hamlets, 1893-8. In this scheme, the main focus of the design is the raised central garden which had a bandstand, and the small gardens to the south and east (Figure 92).<sup>60</sup> The later Millbank Estate, 1903, had a more formal Beaux Arts-inspired axial plan, with a long narrow garden that was informally planted (Figure 93).<sup>61</sup>

### Change of Focus

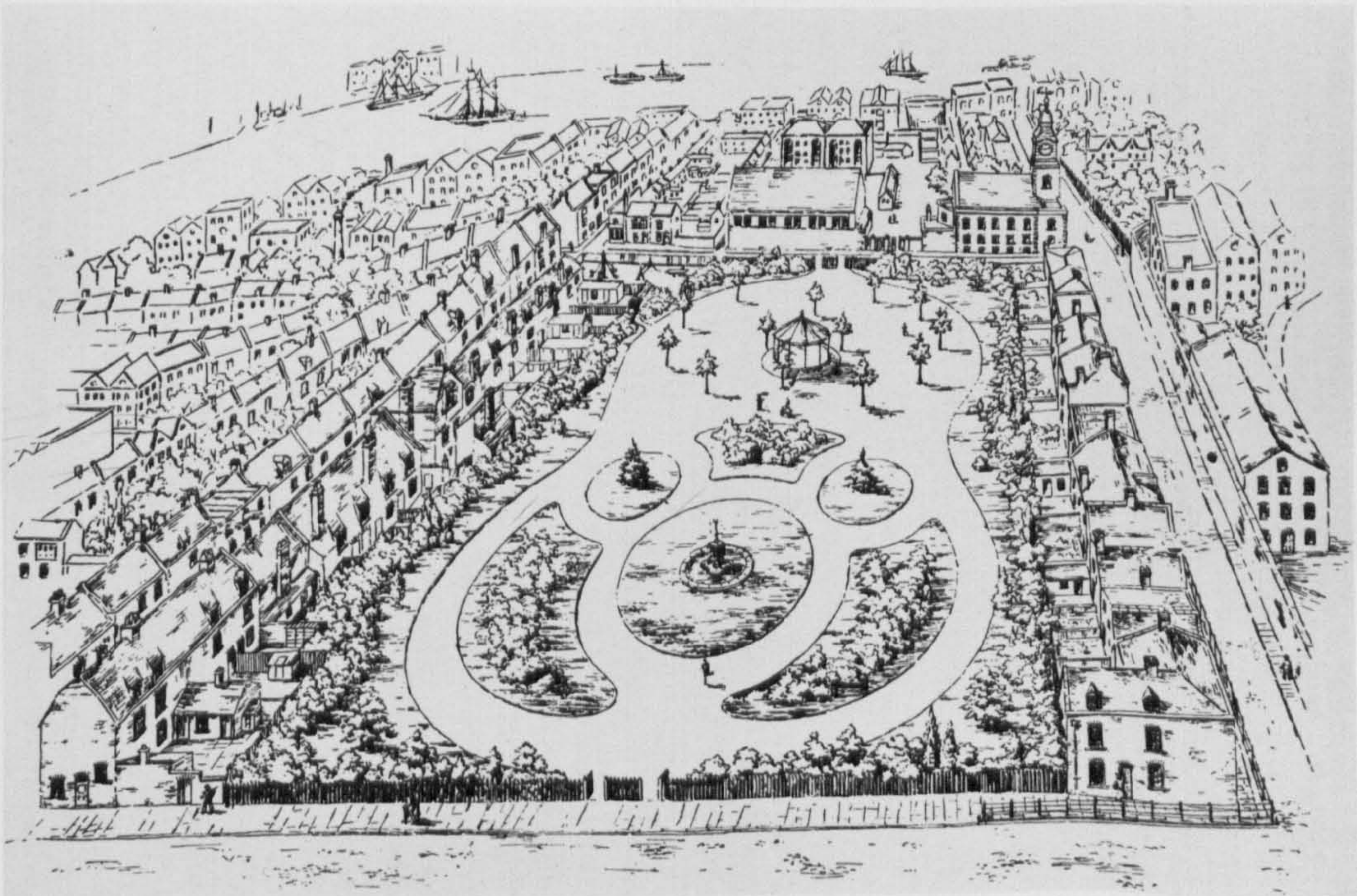
The development of municipal parks and recreation grounds was part of the attempts in the nineteenth-century to solve the problem of the "condition of towns". Such attempts resulted in piecemeal measures the focus of which was on the town and the general urban environment. In the late 1860s and 1890s the direction of attention of certain organisations moves away from towns. Evidence of this change of focus can be seen in the work of the Commons Preservation Society for, in the late 1880s and 1890s, its attention moved from the town to the provision of recreational facilities outside it. Transport was improving, working-hours reduced, and the newly-introduced Bank Holidays meant increased opportunities for longer journeys. In 1894 the Commons Preservation Society merged with the National Footpaths Preservation





Figure 90 Newington Recreation Ground, London, 1884  
(Sexby, op.cit. p.202)

Figure 91 Wapping Recreation Ground, 1891 (Ibid. p.617)





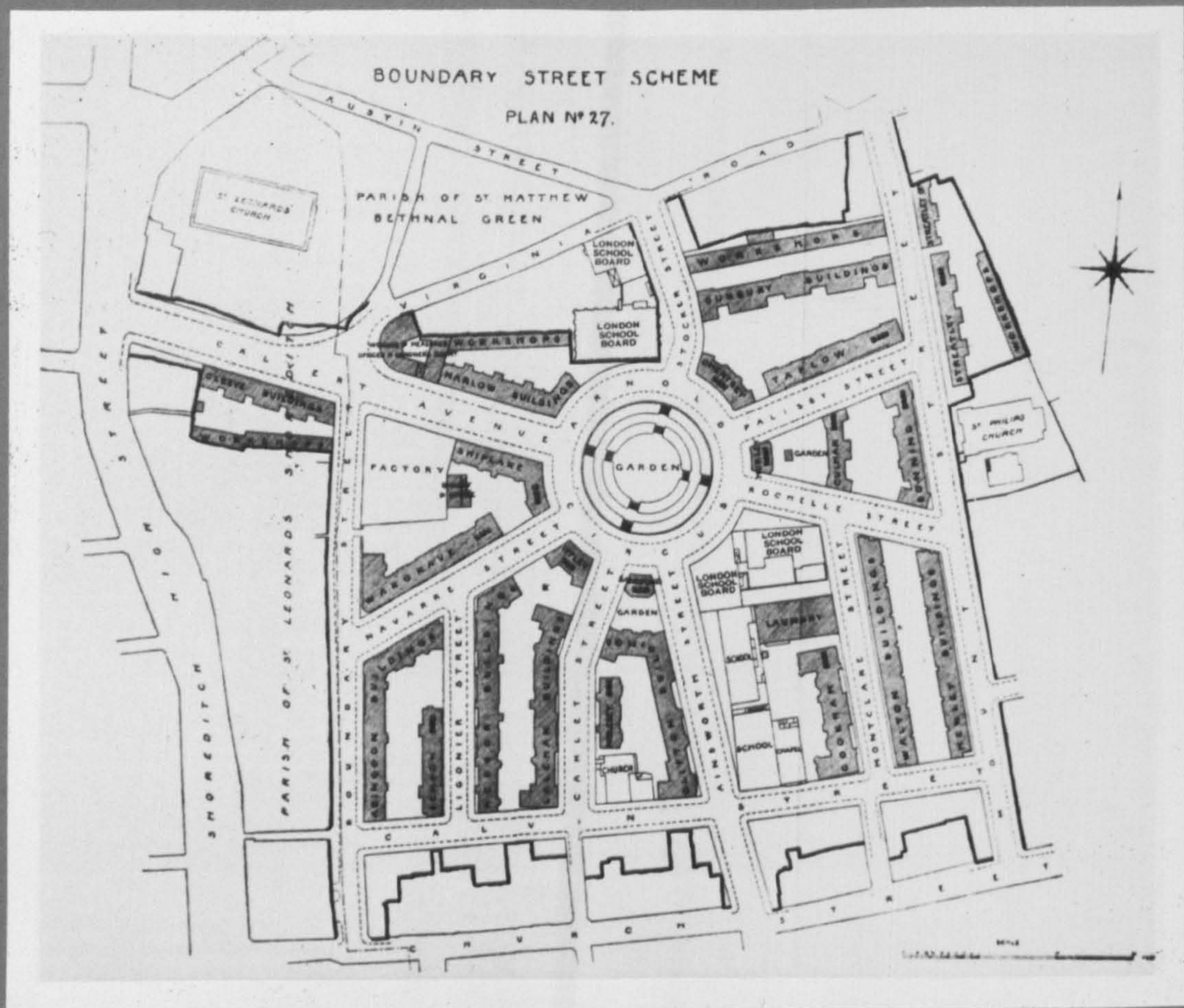


Figure 92 Boundary Street Estate, Tower Hamlets, 1893-8, plan (GLC Record Office)

Figure 93 Millbank Estate Garden, 1903 (Ibid.)





Society for the CPS had come to the conclusion that the preservation of footpaths should become one of the Society's objectives.<sup>62</sup> The need to protect historic sites and national scenery was, by the 1890s, assuming increasing urgency and this change of focus could be seen in the establishment of the National Trust for Historic Sites and Natural Scenery in 1895. Its direct links with the CPS could be seen from the fact that the suggestion for such a body came from the solicitor of that Society and the Trust's articles of Association were signed by nine signatories, six of whom were CPS committee members.<sup>63</sup> This change of focus was also evident in the work of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

### The Contribution of Socialists and the Labour Movement

One of the most active supporters of the open spaces societies in the 1880s was William Morris. In his lectures for the CPS and the Kyrle Societies he spoke of the need to introduce art and beauty into everyone's life but he did not mean by this Art with a capital A, a separate entity to be visited in museums.

When the day comes that there is a serious strike of workmen against the poisoning of air with smoke or the waters with filth, I shall think art is getting on indeed.<sup>64</sup>

Art was part of life, everyone's life, not something apart, and it could only be achieved if daily work was creative rather than to the entrepreneur's profit, and if it took place in as natural an environment as possible. Morris spoke and wrote of the need to control air and water pollution and to improve the urban environment by a variety of means. But, in order for these changes to occur, changes in the conditions of labour would be necessary and recognition of that was one of the factors which led to Morris's conversion to socialism and subsequently to his break with the open spaces societies. After 1883 he became committed to the destruction of a society whose main criterion was profit-making and which degraded craftsmen to machine operatives. The CPS and the Kyrle Society were committed to working for open spaces within the existing capitalist society and it was inevitable that Morris's enthusiasm for them would wane.

Morris thought that not only should beautiful places be protected but that beauty had its place in every house and district. In new



housing estates trees should be preserved and houses built round them. Flats for working people did not have to be grim dark places, but could be built:

in tall blocks, in what might be called vertical streets ... (with) due share of pure air and sunlight ... common laundries and kitchens ... the great hall for dining in, and for social gathering ...<sup>65</sup>

These flats should be surrounded by ample gardens. Morris wanted to see urban growth limited and a proper balance between town and country but he recognised the values that both could offer and was not totally against the city:

... the town to be impregnated with the beauty of the country, and the country with the intelligence and vivid life of the town.<sup>66</sup>

In the planned city there would no longer be haphazard growth but a city centre with public buildings, theatres and gardens surrounded by housing and other buildings, then a belt of parks and gardens followed by an outer zone of buildings. This would not have definite gardens because the whole area would be "a garden thickly besprinkled with houses and other buildings".<sup>67</sup> Morris's contribution to the development of the Garden City ideal was a most important one.

Morris also thought that wild places should be preserved and here his ideas coincided with those of the CPS. The type of experience people would gain from visiting mountains or wild open spaces, even those near to London such as Hampstead Heath, was quite different from the disciplined nature experienced in the municipal park. The latter illustrated authority's treatment of nature, which paralleled working people's experience.

The official mind ... is seriously setting Dame Nature to rights, and by putting her into an approved Nineteenth Century costume hopes to impress the public mind with the necessity of not being too familiar with natural objects.<sup>68</sup>

Morris and many members of the Arts and Crafts Movement were concerned with the urban environment.<sup>69</sup> Their influence on the Garden City Movement was a direct one and that Movement received the support of socialists. Raymond Unwin, the planner of Letchworth, was a keen



supporter of the Socialist League in the 1890s. The park and open spaces movement fitted in well with the reformist socialist demands of the Fabian Society who advocated extending the range of municipal activities. The promotion of municipal parks and recreation grounds under the 1875 Act could be seen as an aspect of this. They also urged the preservation of footpaths and commons and saw this as a step towards the nationalisation of land.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the park movement and the open space movement were not central to socialism, partly because its major concern was with conditions of work, relations between employer and employee, and wages.

### Garden City

In the development of the Garden City and in the attitudes of the advocates of town planning in the early years of the twentieth-century who took the new towns, villages and garden cities of New Earswick, Letchworth, and Hampstead as their models, the change of focus away from the "condition of towns" became apparent. The model industrial villages that had developed during the course of the nineteenth-century featured a variety of open spaces as part of their design. Copley, Yorkshire (1837-53) consisted of two mills and back-to-back cottages but had a recreation ground, while in Saltaire (1850-63), a fourteen-acre park was opened in 1871. Akroyden (1861-3) was laid out in a square which enclosed a central garden, and at Bromborough Pool (1853) there were generous open grassed spaces, which were neither parks nor gardens, between the short terraces of housing. The history of those developments and their contribution to the development of the Garden City are well known.<sup>71</sup>

None of those developments, however, was a "solution" to the urban problems of the time, unless turning away from a problem is regarded as a solution. The Garden City and the model industrial villages represented a new start away from all the urban problems. Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 1902, makes it quite clear that it is a new solution that he is concerned with, not with solving the problems of existing cities.<sup>72</sup>

In the Garden City and garden suburbs the main emphasis was on low-density housing with generous gardens, and streets with generous verges.



The size of the Garden City was limited by Ebenezer Howard to a maximum of 32,000 people, hence its scale and the facilities it could support, such as concert halls, museums, theatres and, ultimately, cinemas, tended to be suburban rather than urban as the example of Letchworth showed clearly. Parks had a role to play in the Garden City but it was a different role from their part in the nineteenth-century city, of an oasis in a built-up area or as a belt between further urban expansion as in Liverpool.

### Conclusion

One of the new directions in park development that became evident in the late 1870s and early 1880s was the development of small parks and recreation grounds. Although the plea for "no more ornamental waters and dirty swans" may have been an exaggeration, it was indicative of a change of emphasis from large-scale parks and prestige projects to the provision of small open spaces for recreation in the working class districts where they were most needed. Such a change of emphasis could only take place in continuation of, as well as in reaction to, the successful establishment of large urban parks and it was only when they had been established that their advantages and disadvantages could be assessed. One desideratum that was identified was wider dispersal:

...it is an absolute sanitary necessity and a duty incumbent upon the sanitary urban authorities to provide, purchase and utilise spaces for the people in all the highly populated districts of large towns.<sup>73</sup>

Small recreation grounds could be squeezed in where they were needed and the disused burial grounds provided a splendid opportunity which was seized. Effective action resulted from the work of reforming organisations such as the MSSA, the Open Spaces Society, and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. The range of facilities provided in these small sites varied from a few seats to playgrounds for children and skittle alleys. Although some disapproved of children playing in such places, the effect of these developments was greatly to improve the open air amenities of the working class districts in which they were situated. Their provision therefore came nearer to meeting the ideals of the SCPW perhaps than did the general development of larger parks that occurred both earlier and concurrently with these developments. In the first housing schemes developed by the L.C.C. it



is possible to see the influence of this new direction in park development on working class housing. The small parks in these schemes formed part of the amenities of the developments.

The other major change of direction which had long term effects on the development of town planning in Britain in the twentieth-century concerned the development of the Garden City. The influence of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement on the Garden City was a direct one and Morris was himself involved in action to promote open spaces during the 1880s. Liberal socialists were directly involved with the Garden City Movement but the park movement was not an important part of socialism although the Fabians argued that the preservation of commons and footpaths was a step in the direction of nationalisation of land.

The development of parks and recreation grounds in the period 1840-1880 formed part of the attempts to solve urban problems in the nineteenth-century. However those problems were identified, the main focus of attention was on the urban environment. Parks and recreation grounds were seen as ways of improving that environment by providing a source of fresh air and a place for physical, social and moral regeneration. With the development of the Garden City, attention was drawn away from the urban environment towards the development of an environment that would be the best of both the country and the town. Parks had a role to play in the Garden City but it was a different one from that in the city. The contribution of municipal parks and recreation grounds to the development of British town planning in the early years of the twentieth-century therefore tended to be an indirect, rather than a direct, one because of the direction in which town planning developed.



## Notes and References

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- 3 Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard and Playground Association, First Report, 1883
- 4 Marriott, op.cit.
- 5 Horsfall, T.C. The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People: the example of Germany, Manchester, 1904
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- 7 Open Spaces Committee, 14 July 1880. Quoted in Jackson, op.cit. p.64
- 8 MCC Proceedings, 6 February 1884, p.125
- 9 Ibid. p.126
- 10 Ibid. p.139
- 11 Ibid. p.142
- 12 Ibid. p.141
- 13 Ibid. p.142
- 14 Letter from Manchester School Board, 20 April 1882. Reprinted in MCC Proceedings, op.cit. p.143
- 15 Letter from the Town Hall, 10 May 1882. Reprinted Ibid.
- 16 MCC Proceedings, op.cit. p.142
- 17 Jackson, op.cit. p.67
- 18 Ibid. p.69
- 19 Ibid. p.70
- 20 MCC Proceedings, op.cit. p.132
- 21 Ibid. p.130
- 22 Jackson, op.cit. pp.71, 101
- 23 MCC Proceedings, op.cit. p.125
- 24 Ibid. p.132



- 25 Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. p.260
- 26 15 & 16 Vict. c.55
- 27 16 & 17 Vict. c.134
- 28 I am grateful to the Local Studies Librarian, Rochdale, for this information.
- 29 Curl, J.S. A Victorian Celebration of Death, Newton Abbot, 1972
- 30 Hunter and Birkett, op.cit. p.51
- 31 Cecil, op.cit. p.247
- 32 PRO Return as to Population and Number of Burial Places in England and Wales Open and Closed by Order in Council, 1874
- 33 Ibid. 1875
- 34 Paxton laid out Coventry Cemetery 1845-7; Kemp laid out Anfield Cemetery in 1863 and prepared plans for a cemetery at Barrow-in-Furness, laid out in 1873. Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.105-6
- 35 44 & 45 Vict. c.34
- 36 47 & 48 Vict. c.72
- 37 48 & 49 Vict. c.167
- 38 40 & 41 Vict. c.36
- 39 Bell, op.cit. p.151. Miranda was Octavia Hill's sister
- 40 Hill, O. "Colour, Space, and Music for the People", Nineteenth Century, May 1884, pp.741-52
- 41 Hill, W.T. Octavia Hill, Pioneer of the National Trust and Housing Reformer, London, 1856, p.107  
Lord Eversley, chairman of the Commons Preservation Society was a member of the Kyrle Society
- 42 Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association, First Annual Report, 1883  
This report listed the members of the Association who included many titled figures. The list ran to several pages and started with H.R.H. Princess Frederika of Hanover and the Marquises and Marchionesses of Tweeddale and of Salisbury.
- 43 The first secretary was Captain G.I. Thompson; Hon. Solicitors, Hornè and Birkett; Hon. Surveyor and Architect, W. Woodward; and Hon. Landscape Gardeners, Miss F. Wilkinson and J. Forsyth Johnson.
- 44 Holmes, B. The London Burial Grounds, London, 1896, p.25



- 45 Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, Third Annual Report, 1885,p.8  
The Association is still in existence today. Its annual reports summarise the work of the Association both in terms of achievements and failures. Several annual reports include maps which show the distribution of open spaces in London in particular years. In addition, the 24th Annual Report, 1906 published summaries of public open spaces for forty-six towns and showed how they had changed between 1883 and 1902.
- 46 Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association (MPGBPA), First Report, 1883, p.1
- 47 Ibid. p.5
- 48 Ibid. Appendix E. p.62. They were:

Trees that will live in London district:

Acacias (Robinia), of sorts  
Poplars (Populus), of sorts  
Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus Glandulosa)  
Almonds (Amygdalus), of sorts  
Pyrus, of sorts  
Birch (Betula),of sorts  
Catalpa, of sorts  
Maples (acer.)  
Maiden's hair Tree (Salisburnia adiantifolia)  
Plane (Platanus), of sorts  
Tulip Trees (Liriodendron tulipifera)  
Walnut Trees (Juglans Regis)  
Willows (Salix), of sorts  
Oak (Quercus)

Shrubs that will live in London:

Azalea Pontica, hardy varieties  
Sumach (Rhus), of sorts  
St. John's wort (Hypericum), of sorts  
Conchorus Japonica, of sorts  
Deutzia, of sorts  
Dogwood (cornus), of sorts  
Elder (Sambucus), of sorts  
Forsythia, of sorts  
Guêlder Rose (Viburnum opulus sterilis) and other sorts  
Lilacs (syringa), of sorts  
Flowering currants (Ribes), of sorts  
Snowdrop Trees (Halesia tetraptera)  
Meadow sweet (spirea), of sorts  
Hawthorn (crataegus), of sorts  
Weigelia, of sorts  
Cytisus, of sorts  
Fig Tree (Fiens)  
Genista, of sorts  
Cotoneaster, of sorts

Climbing plants suitable for London

Honeysuckle (lomeira), of sorts  
Clematis, of sorts  
Hardy vines (vitis), of sorts  
Crataegus Pyracanthus



Bramble (Rubus), of sorts  
Jasmine (Jasminum), of sorts  
Trumpet flower (Tecoma radicaus major)  
Virginia creepers (ampelopsis)

Evergeen shrubs suitable for London

Griselinia, of sorts  
Ancuba Japonica (sic)  
Holly (Ilex), of sorts  
Rhododendrons, of sorts  
Skinimia Japonica  
Spindle Tree (Enonymus Europaeus), and other varieties  
Escallonia, of sorts  
Ligustrum, of sorts  
Tucea, of sorts  
Box (Buxus)  
Cotoneaster microphylla  
Artemesia, of sorts  
Iberis, of sorts  
Hardy Fuchsias  
Hesperus, of sorts  
Rucus, of sorts  
Arundo conspicua  
Enonymus radicaus variegata  
Pernettya, of sorts  
Vincas, of sorts  
London Pride (saxifrage umbrosa  
Dianthus, of sorts  
Arabis Albida, and other sorts  
Willow Herb (Epilobium augustifolium).

- 49 Not all of these were necessarily as a result of the Association's efforts. e.g. St Pancras' disused burial ground had been opened earlier under a special Act of Parliament
- 50 Cecil, op.cit. p.244
- 51 MPGBPA, First Report, op.cit. pp.39-42
- 52 Hardwicke, W. "House accommodation and open space", Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, 1877, p.513
- 53 MPGBPA, First Report, op.cit. p.41
- 54 Sexby, op.cit. p.574
- 55 MPGRPA, First Report, op.cit. pp.55-7
- 56 MCC Proceedings, 6 February 1884, p.145
- 57 Liverpool Argus, May 1878. Quoted in Roberts, op.cit. p.69
- 58 Roberts, op.cit. p.155
- 59 Sexby, op.cit. p.617



- 60 Beattie, S. A Revolution in London Housing, London, 1980, p.19
- 61 Ibid. p.55
- 62 Eversley, op.cit. p.X
- 63 Fadden, R. The Continuing Purpose: a history of the National Trust, its Aims and Work, London, 1968, p.6. Cited by Gould, op.cit. p.180. Sir Robert Hunter, chairman of the National Trust from 1895 to 1913 had been professionally employed by the CPS in many law suits. In September 1884 he addressed the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Birmingham and proposed the creation of an incorporated body to buy and hold land for the nation. The CPS had no power to acquire land and the new organisation would be a statutory body not a voluntary association. According to E.M. Bell it was Octavia Hill who proposed the format of a Trust rather than a company. (Bell, op.cit. p.232)
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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### CONCLUSION

"The Park rose in terraces from the railway station to a street of small villas almost on the ridge of the hill. From its gilded gates to its smallest geranium-slips it was brand-new, and most of it was red. The keeper's house, the bandstand, the kiosks, the balustrades, the shelters - all these assailed the eye with a uniform redness of brick and tile which nullified the pallid greens of the turf and the frail trees. The immense crowd, in order to circulate, moved along in tight processions, inspecting one after another the various features of which they had read full descriptions in the Staffordshire Signal - waterfall, grotto, lake, swans, boat, seats, faience, statues - and scanning with interest the names of the donors so clearly inscribed on such objects of art and craft as from diverse motives had been presented to the town by its citizens ... The town was proud of its achievement, and it had the right to be; for, though this narrow pleasance was in itself unlovely, it symbolised the first faint renaissance of the longing for beauty in a district long given up to unredeemed ugliness".

Anna of the Five Towns  
Arnold Bennett, 1902

Municipal parks were one manifestation of the rise of modern institutions to control the physical and social processes of urbanisation within the context of industrial capitalism. The need for parks was gradually identified in the early decades of the nineteenth-century and evidence of official recognition of that need was established in the SCPW Report of 1833. That report identified the need for parks in terms of access to open space for the increasing working class urban population, contact between the classes to promote social harmony and reduce class tensions, and the provision of places for healthy recreation which would act as an alternative to the public house.

An analysis of the parks shaped in the first phase of park development made it possible to differentiate between semi-public open space in which there were restrictions to entry, and the various forms of public park such as royal parks and rented parks. It was in this phase that the first municipal park, Moor Park, Preston, was formed. The first



phase also provided evidence of certain other advantages that resulted from the development of parks. In particular both Regent's Park and Moor Park, Preston indicated that the creation of a park in conjunction with housing could be a financially-rewarding exercise and that residential land values were enhanced by the presence of a park. In addition the example of Victoria Park, Bath showed that a park could add to the amenities and attractions of a resort town. The second phase of development, 1833-45 saw the introduction of the private speculator into this area and Prince's Park, Liverpool is the first example so far identified of the private formation of a park in conjunction with speculative housing.

The municipal parks developed between 1845-80 were the result of a wide variety of effort which closely reflected the methods of acquisition established in the first and second phases; gifts, leasing, and speculative development. Local authorities raised funds by means of subscriptions, by floating companies, by applying to the government for a grant, by raising a rate, and by recoupment through housing development. Each of these methods could entail a variety of problems. Although recoupment could be successful as the example of Birkenhead showed, it was not always assured as Victoria Park, London illustrated; and in certain instances it could take a long time as it did at Roundhay Park, Leeds or Sefton Park, Liverpool. Where the development was undertaken by a local authority the profits went to, or the losses were borne by, that authority. From the 1860s onwards the role of the public benefactor in park development increased due partly to the legislation of 1859 which made the gift of land for recreation easier, and perhaps partly due to the recognition by the donors that the benefits could be on both sides. If the donors retained control of the land around the park then they could benefit from the increase in land values and many of them did so, although as with the local authorities some had greater success than others. But if a local authority only acquired land for the park itself then there was no opportunity for recoupment since the park could not be used for profitable activities and the only remaining ways of off-setting running costs was by producing and selling hay or by letting grazing rights.



Parks and Health

The role of parks in promoting physical health had been identified by the SCPW as one of the potential benefits, for they provided opportunities for physical exercise. Moreover, they were a source of fresh air for the urban surroundings and performed the role of lungs, for green plants gave off oxygen, despite the effects of air pollution on certain plants and trees. Lists were published of the varieties that flourished in adverse conditions, but even the plane trees which grew well in London could not withstand the atmosphere in Manchester in the 1880s.

Sports and physical exercise in the fresh air promoted physical health. Gymnasia were available for both sexes; however, sports facilities were predominantly for men and the main activities for women were walking and sitting. The emphasis on the role of parks in promoting physical health persisted throughout the century, but towards the end of the period a new element was introduced. The effectiveness of municipal activity began to be identified statistically. For example, F. Dolman<sup>1</sup> related expenditure on baths and the acreage of parks to population density and the death rate (Table 5) and argued that the existence of parks resulted in lower mortality rates.

Table 5

Relationship of population density to expenditure on baths, acreage of parks and the death rate

	<u>Population of Municipal area</u>	<u>Number to the Acre</u>	<u>Expenditure in 1893-94 on Baths</u>	<u>Acreage of Parks</u>	<u>Death- Rates 1893</u>
Birmingham	478,000	39.1	£10,306	360	22.0
Manchester	505,000	40.0	12,577	228	24.9
Liverpool	517,980	98.6	9,259	600	27.4
Glasgow	656,946	56.9	11,272	700	23.4
Bradford	202,975	20.3	4,254	216	20.9
Leeds	367,000	17.7	...	663	22.3

To justify the formation of the Birmingham Open Spaces Society the Medical Officer of Health, Dr Robertson<sup>2</sup> published a pamphlet in 1905 which related the area of towns to the number of persons per acre of park and open space.



Table 6

Relationship of area of towns to number of persons per acre of parks and open space

	<u>Area of town (acres)</u>	<u>No. of persons per acre of Park &amp; Open Space</u>
Newcastle	8,453	206
Bradford	22,844	268
Bristol	17,004	529
Manchester	19,893	551
Nottingham	10,935	758
Liverpool	14,909	769
Sheffield	23,662	904
Birmingham	12,639	1,026

Such "evidence" provided additional justification for municipal expenditure on parks, although it could not and did not differentiate between the contribution of parks to health and the introduction of clean water, effective sewage systems, or improved standards of housing. In the early twentieth-century it was the poor physique of prospective army recruits for the Boer War and for the First World War that underlined the need for more active sports facilities and led to the setting up of such organisations as the National Playing Fields Association.

#### Social and Political Role of Parks

The public health movement had focussed attention on the problems of dirt and disease and in so doing the question of health was debated. During the period in which the municipal park developed the concept of health was extended to include not only physical health but also social and moral health. In so doing recreation and the facilities that it involved came to be seen as part of the necessities of urban life. Parks, museums and, in due course, libraries were a focus for civic pride since they provided evidence that the local authority was assuming the role of guardian of cultural ideals.

According to the park promoters the section of society who needed parks most were the working classes. Other classes had the resources of time and money to travel to open space and fresh air if they so wished but the working classes did not. Their needs were identified not solely in



terms of physical access to open space for fresh air and exercise; the social and political role of the parks was just as important. Parks had a part to play in preserving civil order, imposing discipline, diffusing middle and ruling class standards of moral authority, promoting contact between the classes on middle class and ruling class terms, education, and the restructuring of recreation in order to compete with the unstructured activities associated with the public house.

In the parks the classes would see each other and working people would learn as a result. That learning process was not seen as a two-way one. Working people tended not to be seen as individuals, nor were their recreations seen as having any value, for it was generally assumed that they were associated with drunkenness, vice and immorality.

In the first phase of park development the political role of parks in promoting social control was not evident, but by the 1830s and 1840s it was becoming explicit. The potential danger to established society of a large section of the community who had no recognised political voice, but had the power of large numbers began to be understood. Working people lived in separate communities, there was little contact between the classes, and only at work could they be effectively disciplined. Parks could provide a means whereby discipline could be extended from the work place to the area of recreation. The social unrest of the 1830s and 1840s gave way to a period of calm and economic expansion, yet the attitude that the working classes needed refining and civilising persisted as the example of the role seen for music in the parks in the 1870s indicated.

Time for recreation of working people increased only gradually in the period circa 1845-80 and only for certain sections of that population. Nevertheless, the passing of the Ten Hour Act 1847 and the efforts of the Saturday Half-Holiday Movement in the 1850s drew the attention of the ruling class to the "problem" of working class recreation. That in turn was reinforced by Sabbatarianism which sought to ban Sunday recreations, and the Temperance movement. The real problem of recreation was the concern with limitations to private and, more particularly, to public freedom whether by controlling the type of activity allowed or by controlling the opening hours of the public house, or those of the museum, library or park.



Parks "solved the problem" of working class recreation in a number of ways. The sports that could be played, the type of meetings allowed, the choice of music, the choice of refreshments and the almost total ban on the sale of alcohol, provided direct evidence of the role of the parks in reinforcing middle and ruling class standards. Events that were assumed by the park organisers to be uncontroversial and non-divisive, such as volunteer drilling, were allowed, but political and religious meetings were generally not allowed. The facilities available for women provided further examples of the ways in which the role of the park was differentiated, not only in terms of class but also in terms of sex, and reflected the structure of society as a whole. The sports activities were for males and although there were playgrounds for girls the main activities available to women were walking and sitting. It was only later, in the 1880s, when tennis and cycling were introduced, that sports facilities for women expanded. Those particular activities, however, had middle class rather than working class connotations.

The educational role of the park was evident in the labelling of plants and trees, in the introduction of geological specimens and in the location of museums in certain parks. Furthermore, the orderliness of the park was itself seen as an influence on the behaviour of the working people who visited them. The lesson of nature indicated how successful the park could be "in training the unruly" for nature as it was presented in the municipal park was well ordered and firmly controlled. Criticisms were levied at the techniques of planting adopted in the municipal parks and even J.J. Sexby, first chief officer of the L.C.C. Parks Department, recognised that "The Commons have a peculiar charm in their freedom and natural beauty, as opposed to the restrictions and artificialness of a made park".<sup>3</sup> Many, including William Morris, recognised that this control of nature reflected the way in which working people were controlled in life and, generally speaking, the way in which the middle class liked to have things. Both he and the Commons Preservation Society fought to preserve wild places in the countryside and those that were near London, such as Hampstead Heath, not only because they were open spaces but because the experience of nature in them was quite different from that presented in the parks.

Parks provided an opportunity for strengthening the bond of the family for all members could visit it together. It provided an alternative



attraction to the public house and was an example of rational recreation. On the principle of "bread and circuses", parks could provide a diversion from other activities and both Edwin Chadwick and the promoters of the Manchester/Salford parks were well aware of this role. "Proof" of the effectiveness of parks in changing the behaviour of working people was cited in the context of Derby Arboretum and figures for the decrease in drunkenness and other misdemeanours since the opening of the park were even presented in percentages at Macclesfield!

Although according to the park promoters the greatest need for parks was among the working classes, the intention was that they should be used by all classes. How much working people did in fact use the parks is debatable. Such visual records as are available tend to be associated with special events, such as the opening of the park or a visit by royalty. The crowds depicted on those occasions do not appear from their dress to be working people. Yet the comments by the police of peaceful behaviour, no records of drunkenness etc. indicated that working people were there on those occasions although they were not, apparently, behaving as it was feared they might. The uses which working people could make of the parks depended on their location and the hours they were open. Those mirrored the regularity of factory hours and so the main opportunity to use the park would be on Saturday afternoons and Sunday. But on Sunday the gymnasia were closed and sports and games were banned.

Although the working classes "needed" parks most, it was becoming increasingly recognised by the late 1870s that the "need" had not been fulfilled by the parks that had been developed. Recognition of the lack of local open spaces located in working class districts and accessible to working people led to the development of small parks and recreation grounds.

The names of parks proved an additional and broadly predictable indication of their social and political role. The first Victoria Park dated from 1830 (Bath) and in the period 1845-1880 the most popular names for parks with their promoters were those with royal connotations. To date five Victoria Parks have been identified (London, 1845; Aberdeen, 1871; Portsmouth, 1878; Birmingham, 1878; and Leicester, 1880). Four Alexandra Parks (Oldham, 1866; Glasgow, 1868; Manchester, 1868; and Hastings, 1878), two Albert Parks (Middlesbrough, 1868; and Salford 1877), and two



Queen's Parks (Manchester, 1846 and Glasgow, 1862). In the 1840s and 1850s another popular name with park promoters was Peel Park and three were named then (Manchester, 1846; Bradford, 1850; and Macclesfield, 1854). Where parks were donated, the benefactor's name was often perpetuated in the name of the park (Vernon Park, Stockport; Pearson Park, Hull; Miller Park, Preston). The efforts of local authorities were, however, rarely recognised in the name of the park and Corporation Park, Blackburn, 1857 was an exception.

### Design and Architecture

Throughout the period covered by this study the main influences on park design were Humphry Repton and John Claudius Loudon. At Regent's Park Repton's influence could be seen in the layout of the interior of the park and the disposition of the villas within it. The components of the park, the grass, trees, water, paths, and buildings, were designed and disposed according to picturesque principles. From the villas in the park and the houses on its periphery the park appeared to be an extension to their gardens, applying the theory of appropriation, and the park was so laid out that it appeared to be as large as possible (the theory of apparent extent).

At Derby Arboretum, Loudon introduced certain formal elements in the straight walks terminated by neo-classical shelters, but the paths around the edge of the Arboretum, the planting and the contours of the land ensured that the paths were shielded from each other visually. In the architecture for the lodges Loudon adopted picturesque principles of variety and intricacy.

In the municipal parks of the 1840s, the Manchester/Salford parks, Birkenhead Park and Victoria Park, London, the design principles of Repton and Loudon were applied. The need to shield an urban park visually from the houses surrounding it, however, conflicted with the theory of appropriation. In order that the park should appear as large as possible and in order for it to appear to be a different world and separate from its urban surroundings, a visual barrier in the form of a belt of trees was necessary. The trees acted as a barrier between the park and the surrounding housing inhibiting appropriation, but that in turn did not seem to affect the value of the land on which that housing was built.



The parks were railed or fenced and their entrances guarded by gates and lodges. The scale of the lodge at the main entrance was generally larger than those of the other entrances, so reinforcing the idea that the park was a separate world in which different standards applied from those of the urban surroundings. The buildings in the parks were either for the park users, or for the park-keepers, or for commemorative purposes, and here again picturesque principles were adopted so as to extend variety by means of a wide range of architectural styles. Apart from their physical functions as shelters, lodges, refreshment-houses, etc., the buildings and structures of the park performed a social and political function. Commemorative structures celebrated royal events or visits; the statues of dignitaries or famous personages were there to be looked up to both physically and metaphorically; war trophies and memorials stimulated patriotic feelings. However, some considered that certain wars, such as the discreditable opium wars, should not be so commemorated. "Is it not a pity that the memory of wars that might have been avoided, and which brought us no national credit, should thus be perpetuated", wrote the critic of the Cantonese bell placed in Nottingham Arboretum.<sup>4</sup>

Park design and architecture testified to the standards of the park promoters and administrators throughout the whole period of this study, but the ways in which it did so underwent certain changes in that time. From the later 1860s elements from Italian gardens, such as terraces, were introduced and at Sefton Park, Liverpool, Edouard André introduced ideas of French park design. This later period was also marked by the introduction of larger-scale buildings such as palm houses and conservatories and the increasing introduction of the bandstand. The use of cast-iron in palm houses, pavilions, or bandstands, illustrated the variety and adaptability of this product of technology. Another innovation of this later period was that of commemorative planting. As with commemorative structures, these reinforced the dominant ideology of royalty, or local and national pride.

### Pattern of Park Development

The development of municipal parks in the period 1845-1880 was related to a wide range of factors in which the legislation had a part to play. In the case of the cotton famine, compensatory public investment promoted park development in specific towns, while the Recreation Grounds Act



stimulated the role of the benefactor. Generally the activity of park formation was not solely related to the passing of particular legislation but was a response to a wider range of complex factors. It was only with the passing of the 1875 Public Health Act that a general major increase in activity related to specific legislation could be detected. Park formation continued during slumps in house-building activity and, in some cases, even increased in such periods.<sup>5</sup> It was therefore not directly related to the economic climate either locally or nationally.

An analysis of the geographical distribution of parks formed in the period 1845-1859 shows clearly that the major emphasis was on the north-west of England in those towns associated with the major industries of the country. In the following period 1860-1880 there was still a strong emphasis on the north-western industrial towns but there was also evidence that activity regarding park formation was gradually becoming more general. Smaller towns and suburbs, not particularly associated with industry, and seaside resorts, were beginning to form parks in that period. That trend became more evident in the period following the passing of the 1875 Act. The emphasis on the industrial towns of the north-west was not part of a deliberate plan for such legislative support was available to urban authorities generally.<sup>6</sup>

#### Roles of Central and Local Government

The role of central government in promoting the development of municipal parks in the period post 1833 was not a major one and such action as it did take tended to be piecemeal and tentative. The grant of £10,000 made in 1841 was not followed up by other grants and the provisions for setting aside land for recreation under the terms of the 1836 and 1845 Enclosure Acts were not very effective as the figures showed. The legislation of 1847 and 1848 gave local authorities the power to acquire and maintain land for recreation if the sites were within three miles of the main market, or the principal offices of the Commissioners, or if the site was approved by the Inspector. Although the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 simplified the procedure whereby local authorities could buy or rent land for recreation, they could not apply to central government for a loan to do so.



The legislation of 1859 was directed towards stimulating the role of the benefactor and evidence of its success in this matter was apparent, but it could not be interpreted as in any way strengthening the powers of local authorities to take action themselves in order to form parks. Under the 1860 Act local authorities could acquire, hold, and manage, parks and recreation grounds out of the rates, and a limit of a 6d in the £ rate was stipulated. However, half the estimated cost of the improvements had to be raised by other means, such as subscriptions, donations or the development of a park in conjunction with housing. Park development continued steadily throughout the period of this study through Tory and Whig administrations alike and it was not until after the 1875 Public Health Act, when local authorities could apply for a central government loan to cover all the costs of improvement, that activity really accelerated.

In comparison with the role of central government, that of local government was far more significant. The role of local government in park development in the period preceding the 1875 Act must be seen as one in which the obstacles were severe as, indeed, they were in 'almost every area of municipal activity, for the period of park development was also the period in which the structure of local government was gradually evolving. Despite the difficulties they did succeed in acquiring and managing parks and the variety of methods by which they did so gave some indication of the ingenuity which was applied to overcoming those obstacles. The solution of leasing land was recognised as a temporary one, for the unalienable right of access to such land could only be secured if the park was owned by the local authority. Local authorities faced the difficult problem not only of the inhibiting legislation but also of managing public funds so that the expenditure gave as large a return as possible. The park, with its real merits and also shortcomings, provides an excellent symbol of both the problems and the achievement.

#### Park Location and Town Planning

The recommendations by the SCPW that parks should be located near to working class areas and the terms of the 1847 Act limiting such development to within three miles of the main centre, indicated that the question of park location was taken seriously in the 1830s and 1840s. It was recognised that if parks were to be used by the people for whom they were intended, that is working people, then they must be accessible to them, which in



effect meant within walking distance. Park location was seriously considered in the formation of the Manchester/Salford parks and initially the intention was to develop parks on the four sides of Manchester. In the event, however, three sites were chosen but even these were not immediately adjacent to the working class populations that they were supposed to serve, and the southern part of Manchester was, until the formation of Alexandra Park in 1868, without a park.

When Pennethorne was asked to advise on the site for Victoria Park, London, he recommended a site adjoining the working class area of population in the east end. But the final decision was dictated by the cost of the land and a site that was not so near that population was chosen. Where a local authority was responsible for selecting a site, proximity to working class districts was among the factors considered, but it was not necessarily the most important factor. Availability of potential sites, costs, and the threat of building development unless action was taken to preserve a particular open space, were all important factors to be considered. Where a site was leased or donated there was even less choice in the matter of location.

The development of small parks and recreation grounds in working class areas in the late 1870s and 1880s provided the most successful examples of park location in working class districts. They contributed to the amenities of those districts and their influence could be seen in the design of the first L.C.C. housing estate, the Boundary Street Estate. This development therefore contributed to the debate on working class housing and the question of amenities rather than to town planning.

The question of the contribution of municipal parks to town planning generally is difficult to assess. Combined developments of parks and housing could add new residential districts to a town, as happened, say, with the Stanley and Sefton Parks. The population density of such developments was low, by virtue of the presence of the park and the effect of the development was to add new suburbs to the city. Liverpool's ring of parks could at the same time be seen as an attempt to modify the effects of unchecked urban expansion. If a park alone was formed, then control over the housing subsequently built around it depended on the local pattern of land-ownership rather than on any planned strategy.



Although parks were intended for working people, the houses built around them were not generally for working people, due to the increase in the value of the land as a result of the presence of the park. In a socialist future, such as that envisaged by William Morris, that might not have been the case, but it was bound to be so in the context of industrial capitalism.

All the main types of open space for recreation: parks, gardens, recreation grounds and playgrounds, had been introduced into the urban environment by the 1880s, but the question of their distribution and accessibility remained. Each park development varied according to the particular circumstances of the locality in which it was situated, rather than according to any general strategy in town planning, and comprehensive town planning could not occur until a strategy was agreed upon. The comparison in the 1880s between the merits of large-scale parks and those of more widely dispersed smaller open spaces indicated that the problem was beginning to be confronted. The Report on the Physical Deterioration published in 1904<sup>7</sup> recommended that building bye-laws should include the provision of open space and that this should be provided by local authorities in proportion to the density of the population. The Town Planning Act 1909<sup>8</sup> gave local authorities, for the first time, the power to plan for the future, instead of reacting to the problems of the past and trying to ameliorate them. This then marks the date when the park movement became absorbed into town planning.

Over the whole period in which the municipal park developed, the need for access to open space for recreation was generally agreed; however, the priority given to it underwent a major change. The transformation of burial grounds into open spaces for recreation provides the most direct evidence of the change in public opinion that had taken place. The feeling that the commemoration of the dead was a normal and indeed primary charge upon the living gave way to a feeling that public health and social welfare were considerations of greater weight. This was, by nineteenth-century religious standards, a very notable change indeed.

Municipal parks had their genesis in the private parks of a grand scale, in pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh,<sup>9</sup> and in botanic gardens. They were brought into being by a variety of means in which social conscience, philanthropy, skilful entrepreneurship, politics and municipal enterprise



all played a part. They had literally to be sold to society and so they were, most successfully. Although the facilities that they offered were rather sober in comparison with the entertainment offered in the pleasure gardens,<sup>10</sup> there is no doubt that the parks provided enormous enjoyment. Gated and railed, they were literally and symbolically a world apart. They provided oases of green in areas of brick and stone, contact with nature and the joy of walking on grass or among trees. Although nature in the park appeared in well-disciplined forms, it was still green and refreshing and the flowers were bright and colourful. Parks provided space in which to run freely and safely, or just to sit and dream. At certain points in the larger parks, none of the surroundings was visible, and it was quite possible to imagine oneself in the depths of the countryside rather than surrounded by a city. This was not possible in the smaller recreation grounds but there the advantage was accessibility, which was particularly important for the very young and for the old. The municipal park must therefore be seen as a major contribution to nineteenth-century urban development.



### Notes and References

- 1 Dolman, op.cit. p.139
- 2 Cited in Foster, op.cit. p.63
- 3 Sexby, op.cit. p.xvii
- 4 Mellors, R. The Gardens, Parks and Walks of Nottingham and District, Nottingham, 1926, p.51
- 5 Whitehead, J.W.R. "Fluctuations in the Land-use Composition of Urban Development during the Industrial Era", Erdkunde, Vol. 35, 1981, pp.129-40  
In Figure 7 Whitehead shows the relationship between the establishment of parks and open spaces and house-building activity in London, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Birmingham, Glasgow and Bradford. He does not indicate whether park formation was a form of compensatory public investment.
- 6 But not necessarily to smaller authorities. For example, the Public Improvements Act 1860 was not applicable to boroughs or parishes with populations of less than five hundred (Appendix VII)
- 7 Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, B.P.P., Vol. XXXII, 1904, pp.85, 91
- 8 9 Edw. 7, c.44
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## APPENDIX I

### LANDSCAPE GARDENING THEORIES

#### Humphry Repton and the Picturesque

During the course of the eighteenth-century picturesque theory and practice had undergone various modulations, but in general the main concern of the literature on the subject had been with aesthetics.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the nineteenth-century, publications on the picturesque moved increasingly out of the realm of aesthetic theory into practice, with pattern books providing guide-lines.<sup>2</sup> Picturesque practice embraced not only landscape, but architecture, villa design and town planning and thus had both a direct and an indirect influence on urban park design. The main theoretician and practitioner of landscape gardening at the beginning of the nineteenth-century was Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and it is from him that the first attempt at drawing up the fundamental principles of landscape gardening came. Repton was a practical designer concerned with the convenience of his clients and he thus did not adhere closely to picturesque principles unless they were appropriate to the particular project, "...in whatever relates to man, propriety and convenience, are no less objects of good taste than picturesque effect ..."<sup>3</sup>

Repton advocated that a house should not be set in a lawn but provided with a terrace or parterre which would be used for walking on when grass could not and, in addition, provided architectonic support to the house. Proportion, utility and unity must he thought form the basis of all design.

Repton analysed the sources of pleasure in landscape gardening and the relationship of his ideas to the picturesque can be seen clearly from this analysis. Among the first group of sources of pleasure that he identified were: congruity, i.e. the parts and the whole of the landscape must relate to each other, and all must suit the character of the place and its owner; utility, i.e. comfort and neatness; order and symmetry. All of these qualities were inappropriate to ideas of picturesque beauty, but if they were appropriate to particular situations, then argued Repton, they should be used. In his second group of sources of pleasure, Repton included those that related to ideals of picturesque beauty;



intricacy, which encouraged curiosity; simplicity, i.e. all objects should not be seen at once, but the eye was led to them easily; variety; novelty and contrast. The third group of sources of pleasure related mainly to pride of ownership and included continuity, e.g. delight in a long avenue; association through ancient remains or personal mementoes; grandeur; appropriation, i.e. property boundaries should be disguised to enhance the appearance of an extent of property and pride of ownership therein. Finally, he listed two other sources of pleasure, animation, i.e. water, animals, the wind on the water, smoke from cottages, all of which enlivened the scene; and the changing seasons and times of day.<sup>4</sup>

For buildings, Repton identified two main characteristics: horizontal, i.e. Grecian or Roman; and vertical, which included thirteenth- and fourteenth-century architecture and that of Queen Elizabeth I. In addition, he identified a third, Chinese, which he thought was a mixture of both vertical and horizontal.<sup>5</sup> He recommended that pointed trees should be planted adjacent to Grecian architecture, and rounded trees for Gothic architecture, to provide contrast. He also recommended that near the private house the garden should be fully developed to provide both interest and architectonic support and, at Ashbridge, he planned fifteen different gardens.<sup>6</sup>

Of all Repton's principles, the ones that were to become most important to the development of urban park design were: picturesque beauty, variety, novelty, contrast, appropriation and animation, and evidence of their influence can be seen in Nash's second design for Regent's Park. Repton was involved in planning the design of three London squares, Russell Square, Cadogan Square, and Bloomsbury Square. Russell Square was laid out in 1810. His designs illustrated how he applied his principles to these very restricted areas. At Russell Square a privet and hornbeam hedge screened the walk in the square from the streets, while the centre of the area was left open so that mothers could see their children from the windows of the houses. Flowers and shrubs were variously arranged to suit the tastes for both regular and irregular gardens.<sup>7</sup>

Through his own publications<sup>8</sup> and J.C. Loudon's publication of his work in 1840, in The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late



Humphry Repton Esq., Repton's influence extended far beyond England. Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) preached the English Reptonian school of landscape gardening in America, and Downing's disciple F.L. Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux, the designers of New York's Central Park 1856-63, 1865-70, applied Reptonian principles. In England, Repton's influence could be seen in the work of John Nash, J.C. Loudon and Joseph Paxton, all of whom were major figures in the development of landscape gardening and the urban park.

### J. C. Loudon

J.C. Loudon's contribution to landscape gardening lay in his prolific writings which popularised the subject and introduced it to a far wider audience than hitherto, and in his practical work. When Repton died in 1818, Loudon's importance to landscape gardening was challenged by only one other man, Joseph Paxton (1801-1865). It was Loudon who kept Repton's theories of landscape gardening alive well into the nineteenth-century, by reprinting in one volume his writings on landscape. The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton Esq. was published in 1840. Loudon's own publications included A Treatise on forming, improving and managing Country Residences, 1806; An Encyclopaedia of Gardening, 1822; An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture, 1836; The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion, 1838. In addition, he founded and edited the first three magazines relating to gardening, natural history and architecture respectively: The Gardeners' Magazine, 1826-44; The Magazine of Natural History, 1829-36; The Architectural Magazine, 1834-8.

In Loudon's view, public gardens in England "have originated in the spirit of the people, rather than in that of government",<sup>9</sup> and he thought that as the whole population of a town would benefit from such gardens, they should be instituted and maintained by local government. However, he did not think that this would happen unless a law similar to that proposed by Buckingham was passed.

The style of landscape gardening which is predominantly associated with Loudon is that of the Gardenesque, which he championed in his writings and put into practice. In his introduction to Repton's writings, Loudon



identified two distinct styles of laying out the grounds surrounding a country residence: the "Ancient Roman, Geometric, Regular, or Architectural Style" and the "Modern, English, Irregular, Natural or Landscape Style".<sup>10</sup> According to Loudon, the modern style was first introduced by Kent, and its smooth, bald character, bare of architectural features near the house, soon gave rise to a style characterised by roughness and intricacy, called the Picturesque School. Repton's school of landscape gardening, said Loudon, combined all that was best in the former schools. Now, however, the prevailing taste was for botany and horticulture and the need to display plants to the best advantage had given rise to a school called the Gardenesque.

... the aim of the Gardeneque is to add, to the acknowledged charms of the Repton School, all those which the sciences of gardening and botany in their present advanced state are capable.<sup>11</sup>

It was the growth in botanical knowledge that marked one of the significant differences between the landscape gardening of the nineteenth-century and that of the preceeding century. The prolific growth in the new species of trees and plants available to the nineteenth-century landscape gardener and the wish to show those species to advantage was one of the main reasons behind the development of the Gardenesque, and it was Loudon who married botany to garden-making, and popularised both to the middle class.<sup>12</sup>

Loudon distinguished between promenades, parks and gardens, subdividing the latter into various kinds. Pleasure gardens for recreation and refreshment were usually "formed by private individuals for their own emolument" and included tea and tavern gardens, gardens for sport and gardens for music and dancing.<sup>13</sup> One of the general principles of laying out all gardens was that nature should be imitated but no garden could be "mistaken for a piece of natural scenery". In these gardens there should be unity of expression so that when many objects were present, they were arranged "to form one object or picture".<sup>14</sup> Lack of unity of expression was in Loudon's view "a prevailing error in most public gardens", for walks crossed in all directions, providing a puzzle to the visitor, rather than leading to all the different points within the garden. If the principle of unity were applied, then in each garden there would be one main walk from which "every material



object in the garden may be seen in a general way". This walk should either begin and end at the same entrance, or begin at one main entrance and exit at another and no scene should be seen more than once.<sup>15</sup> From this main walk would be "small episodical walks" to show particular details, e.g. classes of plants in a botanical garden, or particular animals in a zoological garden, but these walks should never be more than a third of the width of the main walks and they should join the main walks at right angles "so as not to seem to invite the stranger to walk in them". In this way there would be no confusion between main walks and subsidiary ones.<sup>16</sup>

Another major principle that Loudon drew attention to was that deriving from the picturesque, that is variety. In order to keep visitors' interest alive and attract their attention "one kind of scene must succeed another" for, without this, nothing would please for any length of time. But how were both variety and unity of expression to be accommodated? The answer lay in the application of relation or order. The various scenes that introduced variety should be related according to rational principles which were recognisable by the visitor.

In a zoological garden, the visiter (sic) should not be led from a cage of canary birds to a den of lions, without passing through the intermediate gradations of birds and of quadraped; and, in a botanical garden, he should not pass at once from plants of the torrid, to those of the frigid, zone ... In a picturesque garden, level, rocky, hilly, and lake scenery should not follow each other at random, nor in such a manner as to produce violent contrasts, but according to consistency and truth.<sup>17</sup>

If these principles were followed then a satisfactory design would result. For example, public parks, which in Loudon's view were jointly for the use of persons on horseback, in carriages and on foot, should have the carriage roads confined to the circumference of the park and the interior reserved for pedestrians. Trees should be planted near the road to form foregrounds to the interior of the park and between the road and the boundary to disguise that boundary. The apparent space of the interior of the park would be accentuated by open groves of scattered trees, or groups of trees to give the greatest depth of view across the park. Throughout the park planting should be such that the limits of the enclosure are not apparent for this would set "bounds to the imagination". Entrances should be few, for the same reason, for their appearance involved the idea of boundary.



## Notes and References

- 1 Among the most important publications were:

Whately, T. Observations on modern gardening, London, 1770  
Mason, W. The English Garden, London, 1777  
Girardin, R-L. Essay on Landscape, Transl. D. Malthus, London, 1783  
Alison, A. Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste, London, 1790  
Gilpin, W. Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty, London, 1792  
Price, U. An Essay on the Picturesque, London, 1794-8  
Knight, R.P. An analytical enquiry into the principles of taste,  
London, 1805

- 2 Among the pattern books published were:

Malton, J. An Essay on British Cottage Architecture, London, 1798  
Robinson, P.F. Rural Architecture, 1822  
Designs for Ornamental Villas, 1827  
Designs for Farm Buildings, 1830  
Village Architecture, 1830  
Designs for Park Entrances and Gate Lodges, 1833  
Designs for Gate Cottages, Lodges, and Park Entrances,  
in various styles, London, 1837  
A New Series of Designs for Ornamental Cottages and  
Villas, 1838  
Papworth, J.B. Rural Residences, London, 1818

- 3 Loudon, J.C. The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton Esq., London, 1840. Reprinted New York, 1969, p.105

- 4 Ibid. pp. 39-94, 111-114

- 5 Ibid. pp. 57-8

- 6 Ibid. pp. 525-536

- 7 Ibid. pp. 342-344

- 8 In addition to Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening, London, 1794, Repton published the following main works, which were collected and republished by Loudon in 1840:

Observations on the theory and practice of Landscape Gardening, London, 1803

An Enquiry into the changes of taste in Landscape Gardening, London, 1806

Designs for the Pavilion at Brighton, 1808

Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, 1816

- 9 Loudon, J.C. "Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades", Gardeners' Magazine, Vol. 11, 1835, p.645



- 10 Loudon, J.C. The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton, Esq. op.cit. p.v
- 11 Ibid. p.ix
- 12 For details of the contradictions in Loudon's theory and practice of the Gardenesque see Tait, A.A. "Loudon and the Return to Formality", pp. 61-76, in MacDougall, E.B. (ed) John Claudius Loudon and the Early Nineteenth Century in Great Britain, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture VI, 1980
- 13 Loudon, J.C. "Remarks on laying out Public Gardens and Promenades", Gardeners' Magazine, op.cit. p.666
- 14 Ibid. pp.648-9
- 15 Loudon recommended that there should not be more than two entrances, as they would break up the apparent extent of the park.
- 16 Ibid. p.650
- 17 Ibid.



APPENDIX II

Payments made out of sum of £10,000 granted by Parliament in 1841 for  
forming public walks in the neighbourhood of large towns  
Office of Works and Public Buildings Act and Papers, Vol. XLVIII, 1857-8

<u>Date</u>	<u>To whom</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			£
1842	Provost of Dundee	Improvement of Magdalen Yard, Dundee	300
	Provost of Arbroath	Improvements in Arbroath	200
1845	J. C. Harter	Public Walks, etc. Manchester	3,000
1848	Town Clerk of Borough of Portsmouth	Towards formation of esplanade on Southern Beach	387.10
1849	R. Peddin	Public Walk, Preston	300
	W. Simpson	Embankment Road and Promenade at Longman Inverness	400
1850	W. Simpson	Completion at Inverness	200
1854	S. Alcock	Public Walks, Sunderland	750
1855	W. B. Addison and H. Brown	On a/t (sic) Peel Park, Bradford	1,500
	Mayor of Macclesfield	Formation of Public Park, Macclesfield	500
1856	J. A. Blake	Completion of Public Park, Waterford	500
Total			£ 8,037 10 0
Balance			1,962 10 0
27 August 1857			£10,000 0 0



APPENDIX III

Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of  
Large Towns and Populous Districts, B.P.P., 1845, Appendix II, Part I.

Questions for Circulation in Large Towns  
and Populous Districts



## QUESTIONS for CIRCULATION in POPULOUS TOWNS and DISTRICTS.

APPENDIX.

Questions for Circulation.

1. State the position of the town or district, and how it is situated with reference to the surrounding country?
2. What is the geological character of the country? Describe the nature of the surface-soil, and of the subsoil and substrata, and the facilities for, or impediments to, drainage?
3. Is the town or district liable to be flooded; and if so, to what extent?
4. Are there any obstructions to the natural drainage, or to the free flow or escape of the flood-water?
5. Is there any public survey of the town or district comprehending a system of levels from any common datum, for the proper regulation of private or public drainage, for the information of builders, or the regulation of new buildings, or for any other structural arrangements necessary for the protection of the public health and convenience?
6. What are the regulations for draining the town or districts? Are the streets, courts, and alleys laid out with proper inclinations for the discharge of surface-water, or are they uneven and unpaved, and favourable to the retention of stagnant moisture, and accumulations of refuse thrown from the houses? Are there any stagnant pools or open ditches contiguous to the dwellings, or in the vicinity?
7. Are there any arrangements for under-drainage, and are they efficient or defective? Are there any sewers or branch-drains in the streets?
8. Have the houses proper necessities? Are they so arranged as to empty into drains or into cess-pools, or in what manner are they cleansed? Are there any public necessities; and if so, in what state are they kept, and under what regulations?
9. Are the house-drains properly cleansed by water or other means, or does the refuse accumulate in them so that they become choked and emit offensive smells?
10. Are the public sewers so constructed as to act without occasioning deposits or accumulations of decomposing refuse? Are they trapped so as to prevent the escape of offensive smells into the streets or houses, or are there any means used to prevent the formation of, or to remove such accumulations?
11. Are there any local regulations in force for the systematic drainage of the districts, streets, or houses, or for the amendment of those drains and sewers which are defective, and occasion accumulations of refuse and emit offensive smells?
12. Is a large proportion of the liquid refuse of the town thrown into the water-courses, or is it allowed to soak into the subsoil, or remain stagnant on the surface?
13. What is the sectional form of each description of sewer and branch house-drain, and what is the average cost of each per running foot?
14. How are the public sewers cleansed, and at what annual expense?
15. Is there any, and what service of scavengers for cleansing the streets, and how often and at what expense are these cleansed?
16. Are those courts and alleys which are inaccessible to carts and inhabited by the poorer classes cleansed by appointed scavengers, and how frequently and in what mode is refuse removed from such places, and at what expense?
17. Are the houses provided with dust-bins for the reception of refuse, and how frequently, and in what mode are they cleansed?
18. What places are used for the deposit of the refuse of the town, and to what extent is it sold for productive use as manure?
19. Is there any local authority vested with adequate powers, and duly responsible for their regular and impartial exercise, for the enforcement of cleansing, and the prevention of all public nuisances within the town or district?
20. In respect to the sites of the houses, are they laid out in wide streets; or are they built in narrow courts and alleys? Are any of the houses built back to back; are the courts closed at the end; are there any, and what arrangements for cleansing?
21. Are there any, and what proportion and description of cellar-dwellings; how are they lighted, drained, and ventilated; are they provided with fire-places?
22. Is there any local Act or provision to prevent the ends of streets being closed up, or crossed by new buildings, or to relieve the overcrowding of districts by promoting the regular extension and most advantageous disposition of suburbs, with proper reservation of open spaces?
23. Are the school-rooms for the labouring classes favourably constructed in respect to site, drainage, light, warmth, and ventilation? Are there proper necessities attached to them? Have they any play-grounds?
24. Are there any open and convenient spaces for exercise, or are there any public parks, gardens, or walks, and in what state are they kept, and under what regulations?
25. Are there any proper open bathing-places or public baths?
26. From what sources is the town supplied with water?
  - a. For domestic use?
  - b. For watering or cleansing the streets?
  - c. For the prevention of fires?
27. What are the qualities of the water supplied, and has there been any analysis of the water in general use? If so, annex it; if not, describe the qualities of the spring or river water, or rain water, and any complaints made, or evils experienced in respect to them?



APPENDIX  
Questions for Circu-  
lar.

26. Describe the several modes in use for the distribution of water?
29. Is the distribution by a private individual, by joint stock company, or by public officers?
30. What is the number of houses in the town and suburbs?
31. In how many houses is the water laid on, and have such houses each a separate tank?
32. Are the poorer classes supplied from stand-pipes placed at particular stations, from pumps, or draw-wells, or are they in the habit of begging water from tradespeople with whom they deal; or how otherwise do they obtain it?
33. Have there been complaints of the mode in which the water is at present supplied to the population, as to the quantity, quality, or price?
34. What is the present annual charge for water laid on in the several classes of houses?
35. What is the quantity supplied for the different sums?
36. In case of the price being unduly enhanced, or of the supply being deficient in quantity or inferior in quality, are there any means of redress to the private individual, or to the public at large?
37. In respect to any deficiencies of supply in quality or quantity, what are the powers deemed requisite to remedy them?
38. Are filters extensively in use in private houses?
39. Is the water kept on constantly night and day, or how often is it kept on?
40. Is there any system of stand-pipes in the town, from which the water may be used for cleansing the pavements and the fronts of the houses?
41. Is it kept on constantly in the mains, so as to be at all times in readiness in all parts of the town in case of fire; is it kept on at high pressure, so that it may be thrown over the highest edifices in such a case?
42. In case of fire, how long is it usually before a full supply of water can be brought to bear on the premises?
43. What are the arrangements in respect to supplies of water for the protection of churches or public buildings, or warehouses, or large private buildings, against fire?
44. What is the average number of fires in the year, and what are the prevailing causes?
45. Are any houses or large ranges of buildings unprotected by party walls from the extension of fire?
46. Are there any well-appointed and practised engines, and service of firemen for the prevention of the extension of fires?
47. What is the general condition of the town or district with respect to health?
48. What is the state of the worst parts of the town, and especially those where, as appears from the mortuary registers, there is the highest rate of mortality, and where fever and other epidemic diseases are the most prevalent amongst the children or the adults?
49. What is the average duration of illness among the working classes throughout the year?
50. What is the general structure and condition of the dwellings of the poorer classes?
51. What number of families of the poorer classes, on the average, inhabit each house? What number of persons live in one room, and what is the general size of such room?
52. What is the general state of the air in the habitations of the poor? Are any arrangements introduced for ventilation?
53. Are the habitations of the labouring classes comfortably warmed in winter? What is the form and construction of the fire-place, and what is the nature of the fuel in common use?
54. Is gas-light generally introduced in the shops or dwelling-houses, and is any escape provided for the bad air which it produces?
55. What is the state of the lodging-houses for the poorer classes, and are there any police or other regulations with regard to them?
56. What proportion of the losses of rent and rates from the poorer descriptions of tenements are caused by interruption in the employment of the inmates, and expenses occasioned by sickness and mortality?
57. What is the extent of parochial or charitable relief given in aid of sickness in the districts where the average duration of life is the lowest?
58. To what extent is medical advice or assistance sought for by the poorer classes, and how far is it afforded to them gratuitously or otherwise?
59. Are there any hospitals or dispensaries in the town or district? What regulations are they under? What is the average number of patients?
60. To what extent and in what manner are the public buildings ventilated?
61. Are there any common lauds belonging to the town, and of what extent and description?
62. Are there any powers under local Acts for enforcing regulations upon any of the above subjects? If so, furnish a copy.



## APPENDIX IV

### CHRONOLOGY OF MUNICIPAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

The size of the park that is recorded is the size that was initially acquired by the local authority. In many instances, additions were made to the original site, but no attempt has been made to record these. The original name of the park is recorded and changes of name noted wherever possible.

The methods of acquisition that are distinguished are as follows:

LA	parks acquired by means of action by local authority*
subs	funds raised by subscription
royal	royal park
leased	park not the property of the local authority until the date noted
gift	land for park donated

- \* Not all local authorities had achieved municipal status at the time they acquired their park and the type of body responsible reflected the variety of local authority administration. The term local authority is used in order to avoid inaccuracies and the complications that would ensue if the nature of each local authority were identified in each case.



MAIN MUNICIPAL PARKS 1845-1885

opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquis- ition	date of local authority acquisition
1845	London	Victoria Park	193	J. Pennethorne/ J. Gibson	royal	1887
1846	Manchester	Philips Park	31	J. Major	subs	1846
		Queen's Park	30	J. Major	subs	1846
	Salford	Peel Park	30	J. Major	subs	1846
1847	Birkenhead	Birkenhead Park	125	J. Paxton	LA	1844
	Preston	Avenham Park	26	J. Milner(1862-5)	LA	1847
1849	Darlington	Bellasses Park (later The People's Park, then South Park)	20	-	leased	1877
1850	Bradford	Peel Park	56		subs	1863
1852	London	Kennington Park	19.5		royal	1887
1853	Torquay	Torwood Gardens	0.25			1853
1854	Bolton	Bradford Park	20		loan	still not municipally owned
	Glasgow	Kelvingrove Park	65	J. Paxton	LA	1852
	Macclesfield	Peel Park (later West Park)	20	Barron & Sons	LA	1854
1856	Birmingham	Adderley Park	10		leased	1871
	Liverpool	Wavertree Park	30		LA	1843
	London	Battersea Park	198	J. Pennethorne/ J. Gibson	royal	1887
	Reading	Forbury Gardens	4	J.B. Clacy	LA	1854
1857	Birmingham	Calthorpe Park	30		leased	1871
	Blackburn	Corporation Park	50		LA	1855
	Glasgow	Glasgow Green	136		LA	1662-1792
	Halifax	People's Park	12	J. Paxton/ E. Milner	gift	1857
	Leeds	Woodhouse Moor	60		LA	1857
	Sunderland	People's Park	14	Mr Lawson/ J. Smith	LA	1855
1858	Stockport	Vernon Park	21		gift	1851
1859	Devonport	Devonport Park	37	R. Veitch & Son (1895)	LA/subs	1858



opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquis- ition	date of local authority acquisition
1860	Peterborough	Stanley Recreation Ground			gift	
1861 .	Gateshead	Windmill Hills	10		LA	1861
1862	Barnsley	Bransley Park (later Locke Park)	17	Mr Fox	gift	1869
	Glasgow	Queen's Park	57	J. Paxton	LA	1857
1863	Liverpool	Shiel Park	15		LA	1847
	Dundee	Baxter Park	38	J. Paxton	gift	
	Hull	Pearson Park	27	J.C. Niven	gift	1860
1864	Birmingham	Aston Hall Park*	49		LA	1864
	Hastings	St Andrews Gardens (later Alexandra Park)		R. Marnock (1878)	LA	1864, 1872
	Leeds	Lemon Street Playground	0.5		LA	
	Preston	Miller Park	11	E. Milner	gift	1864
1865	Croydon	Duppas Hill	35		LA	1865
	Oldham	Alexandra Park	65		LA	1865
1866	Bolton	Bolton Park (later Queen's Park)	46		LA	1864
		Heywood Recreation Ground	9	Henderson	part gift	1862
	Dunfermline	The Public Park	39	Paxton	gift	1863
	Great Yarmouth	St George's Park	10		LA	
	Sunderland	Mobray Extension Park	12	J. Lindsay		
1867	Chester	Grosvenor Park	20	E. Kemp	gift	
	London	Poplar Recreation Ground	2		LA	
1868	Glasgow	Alexandra Park	50	D. M'Lellan	LA	1866
	Liverpool	Newsham Park	114	M. Tyerman	LA	1847
	London	Peckham Rye Park	49		LA	
	Manchester	Alexandra Park	72		LA	
	Middlesbrough	Albert Park	72	Waterfield	gift	1866
	Paisley	Fountain Gardens		J.C. Niven	gift	
	Southport	Hesketh Park	30	E. Kemp	gift	1865

\* Aston Hall Park opened 15 June 1858 but an entrance fee was charged until 1864



opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquis- ition	date of local authority acquisition
1869	Bolton	Darbishire Recreation Ground	2		gift	1868
	Leeds	Bank Lodge Recreation Ground	18			1869
	London	Albert Embankment Gardens		A. McKenzie	LA	1857
		Finsbury Park	115	A. McKenzie	LA	1864
		Southwark Park	63	A. McKenzie	LA	1870
1870	Bradford	Lister Park	55		LA + gift	1870
	Leeds	Bramley Recreation Ground	10		LA	1870
	Liverpool	Stanley Park	100	E. Kemp	LA	1866
1871	Aberdeen	Victoria Park	14	J. Robertson	LA	1871
	Saltaire	Saltaire Park	14	W. Gay	gift	
1872	Ilfracombe	Ropery Meadow			LA	1872
	Leeds	Roundhay Park	420	G. Corson	LA	
	Liverpool	Sefton Park	269	E. André	LA	1865
1873	Birmingham	Cannon Hill Park	60		gift	1873
	Newcastle-upon- Tyne	Leazes Park	10		LA	1873
1874	London	Chelsea Embankment Gardens			LA	
		West Ham Park	80		LA	
	Rochdale	Broadfield Park	19	Stansfield & Son	leased	1894
	Sheffield	Weston Park	12.5	R. Marnock	LA	1873
	Swansea	Brynmill Park			LA	
1875	London	Victoria Embankment Gardens	10	A. McKenzie	LA	
	Nottingham	The Arboretum*	19		LA	1852
	Sheffield	Firth Park	35		gift	
	South Shields	North Park Recreation Ground	4		gift	
1876	Birmingham	Highgate Park	8		LA	1875
		Summerfield Park	12		LA	1876
	Edinburgh	Inverleith Park			LA	1876
	Ilfracombe	Capstone Hill			LA	1876

\* The Arboretum, Nottingham opened in 1852 but free access was granted only on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays.  
Counsel's opinion, circa 1875, was that the Committee could no longer exclude people or charge them admission.



opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquis- ition	date of local authority acquisition
(1876)	Leeds	Woodhouse Ridge	16		LA	1876
	Rotherham	Boston Park	23	Mr Albiston	leased	1873
	Salford	Seedley Park		H. Moore		
	Swansea	Cwmdonkin Park			LA	
1877	Birmingham	Burbury Street Recreation Ground	4		gift	1876
	Gateshead	Saltwell Park	47	E. Kemp	LA	1876
	Leeds	Holbeck Intake	3		LA	1877
	Paisley	Brodie Park	22		gift	
1877	Rochdale	Cronkeyshaw Common	51		LA	1877
	Salford	Albert Park	16	H. Moore		
1878	Bradford	Horton Park	59	W. Gay	LA	1873
	Liverpool	St Martin's Recreation Ground	1.75		LA	
	Llanelli	People's Park	16	W. Barron	LA	1878
	Portsmouth	Victoria Park	12	A. McKenzie	LA	
	West Bromwich	Dartmouth Park	56	C. Turner	leased	1919
	Wigan	Mesnes Park	15.5	J. McClean	gift	1874
1879	Birmingham	Small Heath Park (later Victoria Park)	41		gift	1876
	Bristol	Cotham Gardens	2.5		leased	
	Kilmarnock	Kay Park	41	D. M'Lellan	gift	
	Leeds	Hunslet Moor	69		LA	1879
	London	Oak Road Recreation Ground	4.4		LA	1879
	Manchester	Silver Street Playground	0.75			
	Salford	Heywood Park	20		LA	1878
	Accrington	Ordsal Park		H. Moore	LA	
1880		Higher Antley Recreation Ground	9		LA	
	Altrincham	Milnshaw Park	6		LA	1879
	Bradford	Stamford Park	16	J. Shaw	gift	
	Coventry	Bowling Park	50	Kershaw & Hepworth	LA	1878
	Leicester	Swanswell Recreation Ground			LA	
	London	Victoria Park	70		LA	1880
		St Luke's Parish Playground Whitechapel	0.25		rented	



opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquis- ition	date of local authority acquisition
1881	Edinburgh	West Prince's St Gardens*			LA	1876
	Halifax	Shrogg's Park	24		LA	
	Walsall	The Arboretum**	7		LA	1880
	Wolverhampton	West Park	50	R.H. Vertegans	leased	
	Worthing	People's Park (later Holmfield Park)	15		gift	
1882	Birmingham	St Mary's Gardens	2			
	Derby	Derby Arboretum /	11	J.C. Loudon	gift	1882
	Leicester	Abbey Park	66	Barron & Sons		1878
	Liverpool	Aubrey Street Recreation Ground	1.5			
1883	London	Wanstead Park	132			
	Aberdeen	Duthie Park	44			
	Bristol	Bedminster Pleasure Park	25		gift	1883
	Ealing	Lamas Park			LA	1881
	Grimsby	People's Park	24	Barron & Sons	gift	
	Huddersfield	Beaumont Park	25		gift	1879
	Southend-on-Sea	Prittlewell Square	0.9			
	West Hartlepool	Ward-Jackson Memorial Park	17	Matthew Scott	LA	1883
1884	Brighton	Preston Park	67		LA	1883
	Bristol	St Agnes Gardens	2.5		LA	1884
	Leeds	New Wortley Recreation Ground	30.8		LA	1884
	Liverpool	Brow Street Recreation Ground	0.5		LA	
	Liverpool	Kensington Gardens	18.25		LA	
	London	Newington Recreation Ground	1.5		LA	

\* West Prince's Street Gardens, open to key-holders only, before 1881

\*\* The Arboretum, Walsall opened in 1844 as Walsall Arboretum and Lake Co. Admission charged until 1881

/ Derby Arboretum opened 1840 but free admission only available on certain days until 1882



opened free to public	Town	Park	size acres	Designer	mode of acquisi- tion	date of local authority acquisition
(1884)	Manchester	Mount Street Recreation Ground	1		LA	1884
		Churnett Street Recreation Ground	1.5		LA	1884
		Butler Street Recreation Ground	0.25		LA	1884
		Prussia Street Recreation Ground	0.75		LA	1884
		Queen Street Recreation Ground	0.14		LA	1884
	Newcastle-upon- Tyne	Jesmond Dene	70		gift	1883
1885	Colchester	Recreation Ground	0.6		leased	
	Leicester	Spinney Hill Park	36			
	Liverpool	St Luke's Garden	1			
		St Michael's Garden	1.25			
		St Thomas's Garden	0.25			
	London	Carlton Square Gardens	0.75			
		Mile End				
		St Bartholomew's Churchyard	1			
		Bethnell Green				
		St Paul's Churchyard				
		Rotherhithe				
		Highbury Fields	27.5			
	Manchester	Birchfields Park				
		Cheetham Park				
	Tynemouth	Northumberland Park	10		gift	
	Walsall	Reedwood Park				
		Palfrey Park				



APPENDIX V

TOWNS WITH POPULATIONS OF OVER 25,000 in 1851

Source: Mitchell, B.R. and Deane, P. op.cit. 1962 edition, pp.24-27

<u>Over 25,000</u>	<u>Over 50,000</u>	<u>Over 100,000</u>
Birkenhead	Aberdeen	Birmingham
Blackburn	Bath	Bradford
Cambridge	Belfast	Bristol
Carlisle	Bolton	Edinburgh
Chester	Brighton	Glasgow
Coventry	Dundee	Leeds
Derby	Hull	Liverpool
Dudley	Leicester	London
Exeter	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Manchester
Gateshead	Norwich	Sheffield
Greenock	Nottingham	
Halifax	Oldham	
Huddersfield	Plymouth and Devonport	
Ipswich	Portsmouth	
Macclesfield	Preston	
Northampton	Salford	
Oxford	Stockport	
Paisley	Stoke	
Southampton ,	Sunderland	
South Shields	Wolverhampton	
Swansea		
Tynemouth		
Wakefield		
Walsall		
Wigan		
Worcester		
Yarmouth		
York		



## APPENDIX VI

### BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF MAIN MUNICIPAL PARK DESIGNERS, 1845-1880

ANDRÉ, Edouard François 1840-1912

1860-4 worked with J.C.A. Aspland on Parisian parks

1869-72 designed Sefton Park, Liverpool

#### Publications

Traité des plants de bruyère, 1864

Le Mouvement horticole, 3 vols. 1865-7

Traité des plants à feuillage ornementale, 1866

Les Fougères (with Roze and Rivière), 1867

Traité général des Parcs et Jardins, 1879

Bromeliaceae Andreanal, 1890

#### References

Brown, M. "Sefton Park: the French Connection", Landscape Design, Part 139, August 1982, pp. 11-14

Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.161-2

#### GIBSON, John

Worked with Paxton at Chatsworth from 1833

1835-6 visited India to collect plants for the Duke of Devonshire

1837 Head gardener at Chatsworth

1849 Superintendant of Victoria Park, London under James Pennethorne, succeeding Samuel Curtis

1856 -- worked with Pennethorne on Battersea Park

1871 Overseer of the royal parks in London

#### References

Victoria Park Papers, GLC Record Office

Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.123, 160-1

Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. p.23



### KEMP, Edward

Worked with Paxton at Chatsworth

- 1843-7    laid out Birkenhead Park according to Paxton's design. In July 1847 requested a reduction in his salary so that he could practice his profession in the neighbourhood.
- 1867      Laid out Grosvenor Park, Chester, a gift of the Marquis of Westminster
- 1868      Laid out Hesketh Park, Southport (No documentary evidence has been found that Paxton designed this park, but F.A. Bailey (see below) cites verbal testimony and this was reiterated by G.F. Chadwick).
- 1868-70   Laid out Stanley Park, Liverpool
- 1877      Laid out Saltwell Park, Gateshead

### Publications by Kemp

How to lay out a small Garden, London, 3 editions, 1850, 1858, 1864

The Parks, Gardens etc. of London and its Suburbs, described and illustrated, London, 1851

### References

Birkenhead Road and Improvement Committee Minutes

Liverpool Council Proceedings

The Builder, Vol. 25, No. 1262, 13 April 1867, p.260  
Vol. 35, No. 1792, 9 June 1877, p.594  
Vol. 35, No. 1794, 23 June 1877, p.644

Bailey, F.A. A History of Southport, Southport, 1855

Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.123, 160-1

Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. pp.53, 57

### McKENZIE, Alexander

- 1869      Designed Finsbury Park and Southwark Park, London
- 1871      Designed Embankment Gardens
- 1878      Designed Victoria Park, Portsmouth

Private Notebook, 1870 - Guildhall Library MS 16,861

McKenzie's notebook provides an interesting insight into the day to day problems of park management in the early 1870s. The employment of casual labour to roll the grass (15 June 1870); a short term three-month contract for someone to take charge of the closets in Finsbury Park at 10/- per week (16 March 1871); dealing with complaints such as boys crawling under a fence to get to the rope ground in Southwark (1 February 1871); preventing footpaths across the cricket ground in Southwark Park by planting thorns from Finsbury Park (1 February 1871).

When permission was given for Volunteers to drill in Finsbury Park, it was



McKenzie who decided on the place where they should do so. Only occasionally was he given instructions regarding the planting, and the request that he should hide the advertisements on the Charing Cross and Metropolitan District Railway Station was one of the few examples of such instructions (10 January 1872).

The notebook lists the sums authorised, or quantities of plants, grass seed and shrubs for the various London parks that he was in charge of. For example on 1 May 1872 he noted authorisation to order for the Embankment Gardens:

500 aucubas at about 2/6 each  
300 " 3/6 each  
50 large " 7/6 each  
500 box of sorts at about 2/- each  
500 hollies at about 2/- each  
300 hollies 5/- each  
500 broom, furze and sweet briars if found in pots  
1000 herbaceous plants at about 3d each

#### Publications

The Parks, Open Spaces and Thoroughfares of London, London, 1869

#### References

The Builder 23 November 1867, p.857

Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, op.cit.

Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. p.135

#### M'LELLAN, D.

1868 Designed Alexandra Park, Glasgow

1879 Designed Kay Park, Kilmarnock

#### Publications

Glasgow Public Parks, Glasgow, 1894

#### References

The Builder Vol. 37, No. 1907, 23 August 1879, p.950

#### MAJOR, Joshua

Trained at Knowstrop, near Leeds

1845-6 Designed and laid out Philips Park and Queen's Park, Manchester and Peel Park, Salford

#### Publications

The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, London, 1852

#### References (over)



(Major, Joshua)

References

Manchester Borough Council Minutes  
Manchester Parks Committee Scrapbook  
Manchester Public Parks Committee Minute Books  
Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.97-100

MARNOCK, Robert

1833        Designed Sheffield Botanical and Horticultural Garden  
1840-62     Curator, Royal Botanical Society Garden, Regent's Park  
             Designed Inner Circle Gardens  
1874        Designed Weston Park, Sheffield  
1878        Designed Alexandra Park, Hastings

References

Jones, G.P. and Tyler, J.E. A Century of Progress in Sheffield,  
                                 Sheffield, 1935  
Alexandra Park, Hastings Borough Council, 1982  
Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp. 33, 96-7

MILNER, Edward

Worked with Paxton at Chatsworth

1843        Supervised the construction of Prince's Park, Liverpool for Paxton  
1852-4      Supervised work on the grounds at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham  
             for Paxton  
             Became Curator  
1856-7      Assisted Paxton in the laying out of The People's Park, Halifax  
1862-4      Designed Moor Park, Miller Park and Avenham Park, Preston  
Also designed Howard Park, Glossop  
1871        Designed Pavilion Gardens, Buxton with his son, H.E. Milner  
             (semi-public)

In 1867 he won second prize for the design of Sefton Park, Liverpool

References

Aspden, T. Preston Guide, Preston, 1868  
Hodges, A. "A Victorian Gardener: Edward Milner", Garden History, Vol. 5,  
                                 No. 3, Winter 1977, pp.67-77  
Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.90, 106-8  
             The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit. pp.47, 55, 154, 196  
Tiffany, T. The People's Park, Halifax, Halifax, 1907



### PAXTON, Sir Joseph

- 1826        Head Gardener to the 6th Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth
- 1842-4     Designed Prince's Park, Liverpool (speculative development)
- 1842-3     Designed Upton Park, Slough (speculative development)
- 1843-7     Designed Birkenhead Park
- 1852        Designed Buxton Park (speculative development)
- 1852        Designed Sydenham Park, London (speculative development)
- 1852-4     Designed Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow
- 1856-7     Designed The People's Park, Halifax
- 1860-2     Designed Queen's Park, Glasgow
- 1861-3     Designed Baxter Park, Dundee
- 1864-5     Designed The Public Park, Dunfermline

### Publications

The Horticultural Register, 1831-5 (with J. Harrison)

Paxton's Magazine of Botany and Register of Flowering Plants, 1834-49

The Pocket Botanical Dictionary, 1840, 1849 (with Dr J. Lindley)

A Practical Treatise on the Cultivation of the Dahlia, 1838, 1841

Paxton's Flower Garden, 1880-2 (with Dr J. Lindley)

The Calendar of Garden Operations, c.1840

### References

Chadwick, The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton, op.cit.

### PENNETHORNE, Sir James

- 1820        Worked with John Nash on the development of Regent's Park
- 1832        Joined the Office of Woods and Forests
- 1841-6     Designed Victoria Park, London, later modified by J. Gibson
- 1843        Surveyor and Architect to Office of Woods and Forests
- 1854-6     Designed and laid out Battersea Park with J. Gibson.

### References

Victoria Park Papers, GLC Record Office

Chadwick, The Park and the Town, op.cit. pp.112-3

Summerson, J. The Life and Work of John Nash, Architect, op.cit.



## APPENDIX VII

### SUMMARY OF MAIN LEGISLATION PROMOTING PARK DEVELOPMENT

#### 1836 Enclosure Act

6 & 7 Will. IV, c.115

Common fields exempted from enclosure if they lay within

10	miles of London
3	miles of towns of 100,000 population
2½	70,000
2	30,000
1½	15,000
1	5,000

#### 1845 Enclosure Act

8 & 9 Vict. c.118, s.15, s.30

Consent of those representing one third in value of interests in the land necessary for an application of enclosure.

Approval of two thirds necessary for sanction of enclosure

Special reports to be made to Parliament where commons were within

15	miles of London
4	miles of towns of 100,000 population
3½	70,000
3	30,000
2	10,000

Where common or wasteland was enclosed, land to be set aside for recreation according to size of population:

10	acres above 10,000 population
8	acres for population 5-10,000
5	acres for population 2- 5,000
4	acres for population under 2,000

#### 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act

10 & 11 Vict. c.34

Urban authorities could purchase, rent or otherwise provide land for recreation provided it was not more than three miles from the principal market or the site was approved by the Inspector.

Local authorities were not empowered to maintain a park out of public funds if it was a gift.

#### 1848 Public Health Act

11 & 12 Vict. c.63, s.74

Local Boards of Health empowered to provide, maintain and improve land for municipal parks and to support and contribute towards such land provided by any person whomsoever.



1859 The Recreation Grounds Act

22 Vict. c.27

Land not exceeding £1,000 could be bequeathed for the purpose of providing public recreation grounds and playgrounds.

1860 Public Improvements Act

23 & 24 Vict. c.30, s.1, s.6, s.7

Adoptive Act applicable to any borough or parish with a population of five hundred or more.

Local authorities could acquire, hold and manage land for public walks, parks and playgrounds and could levy rates for maintaining and improving them, to the maximum of 6d in the £, provided two thirds of the rate-payers of any borough or parish of five hundred inhabitants agreed.

But before this rate could be levied, half the estimated cost had to be raised by private subscription, donations, or other means. Local authorities could not borrow money in order to carry out the purposes of the Act.

1863 Town Gardens Protection Act

26 & 27 Vict. c.13, s.4  
                                c.27, s.5

Protection of neglected town gardens could be vested in the local authority of cities or boroughs, or the Metropolitan Board of Works in the case of London.

1863 Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act

26 & 27 Vict. c.70

Local authorities in certain manufacturing districts empowered to borrow money to improve or provide public works, including parks and recreation grounds.

1866 Metropolitan Commons Act

29 & 30 Vict. c.122

All commons within 15 miles of the centre of London protected and regulated.

1871 Public Parks, Schools and Museums Act

34 & 35 Vict. c.13

Extended the provisions of the Recreation Grounds Act 1859. Land up to twenty acres could be donated for the purposes of a public park.



1875 Public Health Act

38 & 39 Vict. c.55

Local authorities empowered to raise a central government loan for the purpose of acquiring or improving land for recreation.

1876 Commons Act

39 & 40 Vict. c.56

Extended the provisions of the 1866 Metropolitan Commons Act outside the metropolitan area.

1877 Metropolitan Open Spaces Act

40 & 41 Vict. c.55

Gave Metropolitan Board of Works power to convert churchyards and make them available to the public.

1881 Open Spaces Act

44 & 45 Vict. c.34

Neglected town gardens could be transferred to local authority

Provision for closed burial grounds to be converted into public open spaces and gardens.



APPENDIX VIIIREPORTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARDS

Loans for public parks, walks, pleasure grounds and recreation grounds

<u>Town</u>		<u>No. of Years</u>	<u>Loan £</u>
<u>3rd Report Vol. XXV, 1874</u>			
Sheffield	Public pleasure ground	30	17,500
Bournemouth	Public pleasure ground	30	2,000
<u>4th Report Vol. XXXI, 1875</u>			
Birmingham	Public pleasure ground	30	8,300
Croydon	Public pleasure ground	30	5,000
Hastings		30	2,755
<u>5th Report Vol. XXXI, 1876</u>			
Clevedon, Somerset	Public pleasure ground	30	550
Gateshead, Durham	Public walks and pleasure ground	50	35,000
Rotherham	Public walks and pleasure ground	30	2,000
Swansea	Public pleasure grounds	30	1,500
<u>6th Report Vol. XXXVI, 1877</u>			
Ealing	Public pleasure grounds, offices and stabling	30	4,660
Llanelly	Sewage disposal and pleasure ground	20	722
Nottingham	Laying out Castle grounds as a museum and park	-	6,500
Portsmouth	Public park and scavengering	30	5,000
Rotherham	Public walks and pleasure grounds	30	500
<u>7th Report Vol. XXXVII, 1878</u>			
Brighton	Erection of wall and fence to public pleasure grounds	30	2,500
Hastings	Public pleasure grounds	50	10,100
Ilfracombe	Pleasure ground and street improvements	50	2,920
	Fire engine, public convenience and pleasure ground	15	806



Liverpool	Widening street, public walks	30	12,000
Over Darwen	Public walks and pleasure ground	15	3,300
Rotherham	Public walks and pleasure ground	30	1,000
West Bromwich	Public pleasure ground	30	7,000

8th Report Vol. XXVIII, 1878/9

Birkenhead	Public park or pleasure ground	30	10,000
Bromley	Public recreation ground	50	2,500
Newcastle on Tyne	Public park & pleasure ground	60	26,742
		30	4,281
Nottingham	Laying out castle and gardens and museum as park		11,000
Sandown I.O.W.	Pleasure ground and costs of provisional order	50	1,477
Winchester	Purchase of land for recreation ground	30	1,250

9th Report Vol. XXVI, 1880

Altrincham	Recreation ground	30	4,000
Bowness	Public pleasure ground	30	600
Hastings	Public pleasure ground and new roads	5	2,733
		50	7,000
Leek	Purchase of land for recreation ground	30	850
Newcastle on Tyne	Public parks or pleasure grounds	60	14,100
		30	15,900
Ryde	Extension of esplanade and public pleasure grounds	30	12,000
Sunderland	Public walks or pleasure ground	-	1,000
	Conservatory	-	2,000
	Fence round Mobray Park	-	450
	Public walk and pleasure ground	-	4,000
Worthing	Pleasure ground	30	1,000

10th Report Vol. XLVI, 1881

Accrington	Public pleasure ground	30	2,500
Birmingham	Wharf improvement, street improvement and laying out Smallheath Park	30	46,800
	Laying out Highgate and Summerfield Parks	30	1,720
Plymouth	Purchase of land for recreation ground	50	4,895



Pontefract	Laying out castle grounds as public pleasure grounds	30	1,000
Ryde (I.O.W.)	Laying out pleasure grounds and estension of parade	30	3,500
South Shields	Street improvement and laying out public walks	20	824
	Street improvement and laying out public walks	30	710
Sunderland	Purchase and laying out land for pleasure grounds	40	2,110
Torquay	Street improvement, stables and recreation ground	30	6,770
Ventnor (I.O.W.)	Public pleasure grounds	30	1,800

11th Report Vol. XXX Pt. 1, 1882

Darlington	Public Park	50	2,350
Darlington	Public Park	30	3,050
Ealing (M'sex)	Recreation ground	50	1,775
Grimsby	Laying out public park	30	6,000
Preston	Street improvement and public park	50	23,840
Rochdale	Public recreation grounds		15,621
Ryde	Extension of esplanade, public walks pleasure ground	50	3,000
W. Bromwich	Laying out public pleasure ground	30	1,000
Weymouth	Urinals, Entrance Lodge at Alexandra Gardens	30	390

13th Report Vol. XXXVII, 1883/4

Acton	Recreation Ground	30	1,000
Birkenhead	Completion of Tranmere Recreation ground	50	23,000
Birmingham	Extension to Summerfield Park	60	325
Brighton	Public walks or pleasure ground and public conveniences	30	6,000
	Recreation ground	60	55,000
Ealing	Street improvement and public walks or pleasure ground	30	4,300
Heston and Isleworth	Public walks and pleasure grounds	30	3,200
Sandown	Public walks and pleasure grounds	50	2,660
Southend	Public walks or pleasure grounds	30	600
		20	1,383
W. Hartlepool	Public walks and pleasure grounds	30	4,000



Alverstoke		20	550
Derby	Land for public walks and pleasure grounds	50	5,500
	Fencing for public walks and pleasure grounds	20	250
E. Stonehouse	Public promenade and recreation ground	20	500
Folkestone	Laying out public pleasure ground	20	1,000
Halifax	Laying out and improvement of park	20	4,000
	Land for public walks and pleasure ground	50	8,600
Hastings	Public walk and pleasure ground	20	162
Havent	Public pleasure ground	30	1,140
Hove	Laying out of public recreation ground	20	4,000
		25	4,000
Keighley	Land for public walk and pleasure ground	50	490
	Laying out public walk and pleasure ground	30	3,314
		20	5,484
		10	1,812
Kenilworth	Land for public walk and pleasure ground	50	425
Liverpool	Land for public pleasure ground	50	8,000
	Laying out public pleasure ground	20	1,000
Middleton	Land for pleasure ground	50	240
Newark on Trent	Land for pleasure ground	30	500
Penzance	Public walk and pleasure ground	20	1,500
Portsmouth	Laying out public walk	25	4,500
Richmond	Public walks and pleasure ground	30	2,500
Sandal Magna (Yorks)	Laying out public walks and pleasure ground	30	1,100
Shipley	Public walk and pleasure ground	20	821
Trowbridge	Street improvement and pleasure ground improvement	30	900
Wavertree	Public walk and pleasure ground	10	600
West Ham	Laying out public walk	20	4,000
		10	1,000



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# Industrialisation, Leisure and Morality

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This paper forms part of an investigation into the development of the municipal park in the major industrial towns in the period between 1840 and 1880. Recognition of the need to provide public open space relates directly to the growth of towns. The population expansion from approximately 2.5 million people in England and Wales in 1801 to 18 million in 1851 was accompanied by a rapid increase in the size of towns. The first group of towns outside London to reach and surpass the 100,000 population figure was Manchester with Salford, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham;<sup>1</sup> the second group to do so included Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Newcastle upon Tyne, Bradford and Stoke-on-Trent.

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Industrialisation is usually considered in terms of technology, work and production, while if leisure is considered at all then the focus tends to be on the leisure problems of the upper and middle classes. The link between technology and leisure, seen in the development of the railways or the bioscope, affected a broadening sector of the population as the nineteenth century progressed, but the emphasis here has, with a few exceptions, been on technology rather than on the social impact.

The main sources of information on the living conditions and working life of the working population in the nineteenth century have been the Reports of Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry, and Parliamentary Papers, and these must necessarily be biased – whether consciously or not – by the investigators who are seeking evidence or asking questions. However, if we look at the diaries of working people, then we get a much more accurate view of what they saw as important issues in their own lives, and one of the things that receives little emphasis in these diaries is their work. Very little was written about it; what was of far greater importance was life outside work with family, friends and workmates. Personal relationships; group activities, with church or chapel, trade union or Mechanics Institute; visits to fairs or markets; or walks with friends: these form the main topics.<sup>2</sup> While some working conditions provided scope for social contact, it was the time spent outside work that was more important: leisure time, in other words. How leisure time is spent depends not only on inclination but also on the time available and the facilities available.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the pre-industrial 'holy days' (spelt with a 'y') were usually linked with religious festivals and involved fairs, feasts, dancing and drinking. By the 1830s such traditional holy days were dying out in the north and the few days that did remain for local festivals and that were taken as holidays by the local population, were not paid

holidays. Overtime was the general means of making up for loss of wages.

Reports on factory conditions identified three groups of 'holidays': those enforced by employers due to the state of the industry, when employees were laid off or sacked<sup>3</sup> (though we would not use the term in this way today); time taken off by employees without the agreement of employers; and time off recognised by both employers and employees. The 1833 Factory Act made holidays statutory for young workers – four days or eight half days, and a whole day at Christmas and Good Friday – but there were many regional and trade variations. The decline of traditional holidays and local fairs and fetes was accelerated not only by the adverse economic conditions of the late 1850s, but also by new opportunities for pleasure afforded by the railways. Half-price excursion trips to the seaside date from the 1840s, as do Works Outings.<sup>4</sup> Thus not only did the number of holidays change and decline, but there was also a change in the type of holiday activity taking place.

It was not until 1871 and the passing of the Bank Holiday Act that legislative measures were taken to increase existing holidays to include Boxing Day, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and the first Monday in August.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the century most of the traditional holidays had been replaced by these four official holidays; the more skilled workers were getting a week's holiday with pay, but the unskilled and semi-skilled often did not even get the four Bank Holidays with pay.

The question raised by employers and reformers was whether it was really in the interests of employees to be granted more holidays, because this would involve them in increased financial sacrifice. The *Illustrated London News* in 1863 carried an article on 'People's Parks and People's Holidays', which recognised that relaxation and recreation were necessary for everyone and that the present system of holidays was inadequate; but for the millions who labour six days a week it went on: 'There is no problem more difficult of solution than that which involves the affording of more holidays to the working classes without at the same time diminishing their hours of subsistence.'

This article argued that as it was not possible to interfere in the relationship between employer and employee without detriment to the latter, the next best thing would be to give working men and women the opportunity to spend time in the fresh air beneath 'the shade of trees, by the margin of fair waters, and in the grateful freshness of grass . . . Let there be no people's town or district without its people's park . . .'<sup>6</sup>

## The Problem of Leisure

Opportunities for using leisure facilities and for having leisure do not depend solely on the number of agreed



holidays. The length of the working day and of the working week are of greater significance, and it is arguable that the 'problem' of leisure for the majority of the population did not come into existence until the working day and working week were shortened sufficiently to allow the residual time to be used for pleasure. This problem was pointed to by Matthew Arnold in 'Culture and Society'. The aristocrats (Barbarians), he said, had plenty of room to do what they liked on their estates; hunt, shoot, fish and behave as they pleased (ie barbarically), while the middle class (Philistines) were so restricted by their social and religious observances that they had little time for pleasure, and in any case the idea of pleasure for the sake of pleasure for the evangelically influenced middle class would have seemed positively sinful. Thus, doing what one likes did not present a problem so long as only the aristocrats and middle class were involved. But, says Arnold, it was 'getting inconvenient and productive of anarchy now that the populace wants to do what it likes too'.<sup>7</sup>

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the working day, week and year lengthened, and it was not until 1836 that the concept of the Normal Day was established by the London engineers. This was ten hours (60 hours per week), and the Ten Hours Act of 1847 brought the working week for women and children under 18 in textile factories down to 60 hours, with work stopping on Saturday at 2.00 pm. Factories and workshops with an established work pattern made the concept of the normal day applicable, but it was not so applicable to skilled workers working on piece rates or in small workshops; unskilled workers in the continuous process industries and in transport; or domestic workers, whose hours remained well above those established by the normal day. In blast furnaces, chemical works and gas plants, a 12-hour shift system was generally worked, seven days a week. These industries expanded during the 1860s and 1870s, and with them the number of workers working a 72 to 84 hour week.<sup>8</sup>

The regular pattern of work established by the mechanised industries of the north contrasted with the irregular working week of workshop industries using traditional methods of production in the Midlands and the Black Country. There the pattern was three or four days' intensive labour at the end of the week and a holiday on Monday and possibly Tuesday, and this irregular pattern was only gradually broken down in the 1870s and 1880s.

The favourable trade conditions of the early 1870s brought the demand for the nine hour day, and in 1893/4 the Eight Hour Day Movement. The gradual decrease in the normal working day was achieved during the period from 1840 to the end of the century by the trade union movement, which provided the organisational framework within which shorter hours could be demanded effectively when economic conditions were favourable. This decrease in hours implies that the result must have been more leisure time, but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one, since the length of the normal working day does not indicate the amount of overtime worked.

## The Working Week

By the end of the nineteenth century the length of the working week for the majority of workers was five-and-a-half days. The growth of the Saturday half holiday was linked to the development of the normal working day, and an active Half-Holiday Movement began in Manchester in 1843 among clerks and warehouse workers.<sup>9</sup> The Half Holiday Movement was concerned not only with the cessation of work at 1.00 pm on Saturday, but also with the early payment of wages, and both in turn had a direct link with the whole question as to how Sunday should be observed. The argument of the moralists was that the Saturday half holiday would enable the working people, except shop workers, to do their domestic chores and even to relax by going on excursions on a Saturday afternoon, and as a result Sunday would be kept free to be observed 'properly'. Throughout the 1850s there was a steady movement towards the introduction of the Saturday half holiday and the early payment of wages, with Manchester and the north leading London and the south, and the Midlands. In the Midlands, with their much less mechanised industries, the tradition of Saint Monday persisted until the 1870s, when it declined gradually as mechanisation increased, and was replaced by the Saturday half holiday.

## Attitudes to Leisure

How leisure time is spent depends not only on the time available, but also on the facilities available. The provision of facilities in turn depends on what is deemed appropriate by those in a position to make their ideas known and put into effect, and a moral stance is implied by the choice of particular facilities. The local facilities that tended to be provided first as towns expanded were those associated with commercial prospects, that is shops and public houses; in Birmingham in 1848 there was one public house for every 166 inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> In none of the major industrial cities did church building or the provision of open space keep pace with the expanding urban population.

As the nineteenth century progressed, municipal councils acquired increasing powers and responsibilities for improving the physical environment, and the public health movement focussed attention not only on the problems of dirt and disease, but also on the question of health. How does one evaluate the 'health' of people? During the course of the nineteenth century, town councils, reformers and moralists extended the concept of health to include social health and moral health, and facilities for leisure came to be seen as part of the basic social equipment of urban life. Civic consciousness and municipal pride could be measured in terms of whether a city had, or planned, a library, museum, art gallery, parks, baths or gymnasia.<sup>11</sup> The attitude to leisure that lay behind this was based on a belief in the moral basis of social behaviour and in the duty of the leisured and wealthy to set an example, by their conduct, to those less fortunate, by dedicating themselves to intellectual and moral improvement. For the middle and aspiring middle class leisure consequently became a very self-conscious process.

How much the library, museum and art gallery



should be seen in these terms of liberal culture, and how much they should be seen as a genuine attempt to provide facilities for the working population, can perhaps be indicated by examining their hours of opening and closing and comparing these with the hours of the normal working day and normal working week in particular areas.

Certainly in the context of parks these attitudes to leisure became apparent. Official recognition of the need to provide open space in expanding cities dates from 1833, with the report of the Select Committee on Public Walks. Dr J. P. Kay, a physician from Manchester, emphasised the question of physical health. 'At present the entire labouring population of Manchester is without any season of recreation, and is ignorant of all amusements, excepting that very small portion that frequents the theatre. Healthful exercise in the open air is seldom or never taken by the artisans of this town and their health certainly suffers considerable depression from this deprivation. The reason of this state of the people is that all scenes of interest are remote from the town and that the walks which can be enjoyed by the poor are chiefly the turnpike roads, alternatively dusty or muddy. Were parks provided, recreation would be taken with avidity . . .'<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the century statistics were being presented for the major industrial cities, relating the number of people per acre in the main municipal areas to the expenditure on baths, the acreage of parks and the death rate.<sup>13</sup>

## The Provision of Parks

Official action relating to the formation of public parks can be divided into two main sections: the identification of the problem through such reports as those on the health of towns and the reports of Select Committees; and legislation passed to permit construction of parks. Of the latter, by far the most important from the point of view of northern industrial towns was the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act of 1863-4, designed to provide work for cotton industry workers put out of work by the cotton famine. Under this Act £1,850,000 was set aside for urban improvements; streets, waterworks, sewage and parks, and there is evidence of increased activity in the laying out of parks in the 1860s. *The Builder*, for example noted that in Sunderland, Everton, Oldham, Hulme, Bolton and Lancaster, land was being acquired for public parks.<sup>14</sup>

Among the benefits that it was thought would derive from the provision of parks – apart from the opportunities for physical recreation in the open air – were: 'a better use of the Sunday, and a substitution of innocent amusements at all other times, for the debasing pleasures now in vogue';<sup>15</sup> and an improvement in the cleanliness, neatness and appearance of the middle and humble classes using them, 'because a man walking with his family, among his neighbours of different ranks, will naturally be desirous to be properly clothed and that his wife and children should be so also.'<sup>16</sup> From this it was argued that the provision of public walks would have a direct effect on the industry and economy of the country, for they would promote the spirit of pride and competitiveness. Such

provisions should not however be free, a small cost should be made to defray the expenses involved.

Indeed the provision of free leisure facilities came by some to be seen as enormous evils. 'There is a very strong opinion abroad about amusements, free parks, free libraries . . . and the enormous evils, morally and socially, arising from making any kind of amusement for the lower classes eleemosynary [free] . . . nothing is more mischievous in the present state of society . . . as to Peel Park [Manchester 1845] I cannot go a dozen yards in that place without seeing the invidious distinction of classes marked out and the poor man tainted with the boon that is extended to him, which is a very great mischief.' Such free facilities would in other words be socially divisive because the different classes of society would see and compare each other.<sup>17</sup>

Peel Park, Phillips Park and Queens Park, designed by Joshua Major, were opened in 1846 and the facilities provided included pleasure grounds and promenades, archery, skittles, quoits, a bowling green, climbing poles, a gymnasium, marbles, seesaws for males and seesaws for females and space sufficient for cricket, football, leaping poles and for large public meetings.<sup>18</sup>

Bands played in the parks and concerts were very well attended. Nevertheless, in 1856 the Manchester Borough Council decided as a result of Sabbatarian influence to ban Sunday concerts, although the reason given was that they clashed with the open-air meetings of Sunday Schools.<sup>19</sup> Ten years later there are references to a meeting held in Manchester's Free Trade Hall 'protesting against the exclusion of the people from Metropolitan Parks,'<sup>20</sup> which leads one to question how accessible such facilities were to the working population. But this related to the opening and closing times of the parks in the morning and evening and the possibility of walking through them, which provided the most direct route to work.

Manchester's public parks were the first to be opened in a major industrial city; before the public parks came into being, the opportunities for outdoor recreation in Manchester were, for the majority, very restricted. While the Golf Club (1815), Belle Vue Gardens (1836) and Vauxhall Gardens offered certain facilities to certain sectors of the population, for the majority recreation centred round the public house and music saloons and was not in the open air. The Casino was one of the largest of the music saloons and estimated attendance was 15,000 people per week, of whom a great number were under 15. The entrance fee was 2d, and this was returned in the form of refreshment. The entertainment included clog and grotesque dancing, juggling and singing.<sup>21</sup>

In 1826 the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths was set up to preserve the footpaths through the fields around Manchester, but these were soon swamped by the urban expansion, as the quotation from Dr Kay in 1833 indicated. Like many other towns, Manchester acquired a botanical and horticultural garden at Old Trafford which opened in 1831,<sup>22</sup> but this was open only to subscribers, not to the public.

The situation at Liverpool was not very different. Liverpool's botanic garden was established in 1802, and in 1840 the town council purchased the right of free



access to the public on Sundays and one other day of the week. John Finch, iron merchant of Liverpool, testified to the 1834 Select Committee on Drunkenness: 'It is a very absurd thing that on Sundays, especially in Liverpool, all the public houses are open, and all the public walks, cemeteries, zoological gardens and botanical gardens where people might amuse themselves innocently are closed.'<sup>23</sup>

Liverpool bought land for a public park in 1848, but it was not until 1865 that parliamentary powers were granted to create Stanley, Newsham and Sefton Parks (1865-68). The excuse for the delay, made to the 1844 Select Committee on Public Walks, has a familiar ring: 'the value of land is so great in the vicinity of Liverpool and the council have had so many demands upon it that they do not feel justified in incurring such expense' as that entailed in laying out a park. André and Hornblower, who designed Sefton Park, estimated £85,000 – a figure that did not include the cost of drainage (£24,000). The purchase price of Sefton Park was £250,000 in 1865.<sup>24</sup> A branch library could be stocked and opened for £3,000 to £4,000. At Sefton Park there was provision for football, cricket and rounders, tennis courts were added later, as were boating and fishing facilities.

Sheffield acquired a botanic garden in 1836, but this only became freely available to the public in 1898. Birmingham acquired a botanic garden in 1831, but at this time the lack of open space does not seem to have been a problem, even though Birmingham had no public open spaces or common land. The practice in Birmingham in the early 1830s was to rent gardens around the town for one guinea per year – allotments in other words. On these plots there would be a little summer-house, and working men would spend their evenings and Sundays there with their families and children.<sup>25</sup> Allotments were a popular form of entertainment, as witnesses to the Select Committee on Allotments testified. In the Midlands, the Northern and Midland Artisans Labourer's Friend Society, which had branches in Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, aimed to acquire land for allotments and let it out.<sup>26</sup>

The pattern of provision of open space in London was rather different from that in the new industrial towns, partly because it had been a large city for much longer, and partly because of the existence of the Royal Parks in the centre and west, which had long been available for public use. Hyde Park and Green Park were open to all, while St James's Park and Kensington Gardens were open to 'well-behaved and properly dressed people'. But for the population in the north, south and east of London, these areas were too inaccessible. Regents Park was not opened to the public until 1838 and in 1841 the north-west corner was opened for public use, with the area between Hanover Terrace, Sussex Place, Cornwall Terrace and the lake open as subscription gardens to those who paid the fee.<sup>27</sup>

In 1840 an Act was passed for land to be bought for development in Hackney, Bethnal Green and Bow, part of the development to consist of roads and houses with 237 acres set aside as a park; Victoria Park opened in 1845. The site for the park was flat, and

Pennethorne's design divided it into two sections each with a lake in the centre. Plans for well laid out approach roads linking the park to its surroundings, and attractive terraces around the edge as in Regents Park, ran into financial difficulties. "'Where is Victoria Park?" is not an infrequent question even within 100 yds of the gate', complained *The Builder*.<sup>28</sup> Another criticism levelled at Victoria Park in this article was that, although it was so large and built at public expense, it did not fulfil the requirements of the poor, because a two or three-mile walk was involved for a woman wanting to take her children. Although a great number of people used the park it was argued that a better solution would have been a number of smaller, railed-off areas in the poor districts – four or five acres of grass with a few seats – where a woman could leave her children safe in the charge of the gatekeeper while she went to work, and where cricket could be played, kites flown, and games could be played safely.<sup>29</sup>

### Sunday and the Parks

The use of parks, the facilities that should be provided, and the question of how Sunday in particular should be kept, are complicated issues, in which the two major factors were the Temperance Movement and Sabbatarianism. The Temperance Movement had as its aim the transformation of social behaviour. The teetotal, non-conformist middle-class members of the Movement aimed to achieve this by attacking the drinking of alcohol, which they saw as a fundamental moral, religious and social evil which was particularly reprehensible on Sundays. In Parliament the Movement sought to make the Government bow to religious pressure, but the Central Association for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor on Sundays failed to achieve its aim, and as a result public houses remained open on Sundays, while places of 'innocent amusement' remained closed.

'The public house is for the operative what the public squares were for the ancients', wrote a Frenchman who visited Manchester in 1844. Leisure time on Saturday and Sunday are spent in intoxication because 'in Protestant countries ... bigoted Puritanism ... is opposed to all innocent recreation ... the more rigorously the Sabbath is observed, the more frequented are the public houses and gin shops.'<sup>30</sup>

For the Sabbatarians it was better to gain political advantage by defending the right of the working population to drink beer than to give them the opportunity to educate themselves in libraries or museums, or to have access to the open air. The Sabbatarian attitude to parks appeared in the Lord's Day Observance Society's Quarterly Publication for July 1852: 'Far better it was even that a man should be feeble and sickly, and have a "Conscience void of offence toward God", than that he should be strong and healthy through disobeying God.'<sup>31</sup>

Sunday in the Sabbatarian view was for 'spiritual exercises alone', and amusements were 'innocent only when limited to the ordinary days of the week'.<sup>32</sup> Sabbatarians argued that national disaster would follow if 'bands, sight-seeing, public houses, shopping, public baking, news rooms, pigeon-flying, gardening, funerals, walking, matches, parks, museums, mechan-



res institutions, lecture halls and libraries' were indulged in on Sundays.<sup>33</sup> But while Sunday recreations were banned by the Sabbatarians, their attitude to labour was to justify it in terms of 'piety and necessity'.

The Sabbatarians preached a religious and social doctrine to men who had ample opportunity to take recreation during the week: that it was a sin to take recreation on Sundays, but that they could justifiably enjoy their servants' labour. It also told men who had little opportunity for recreation during the week that if they did take recreation on Sundays they would be made to work seven days a week. So successful were the Sabbatarians in their propaganda that they convinced the working classes that if Sunday amusements were not prohibited, the religious nature of the day would be broken, and with this the embargo on Sunday labour. The result would be increasing competition that would involve the whole working population and destroy their day of rest.<sup>34</sup> Thus, although the Sabbatarian movement was not working class, it successfully claimed in the 1850s and 1860s to be acting on their behalf, by protecting their right to a day of rest on Sunday.<sup>35</sup> Among their successes were the closure of the Crystal Palace on Sundays in 1851, the closure of the British Museum on Sundays in 1855 and the banning of bands in parks in London and many provincial towns in 1856. Their opposition to Sunday travel affected the attitudes of the public and railway policy; the number of Sunday excursionists to Brighton fell in the 1860s from 6,000 or 7,000 to 2,000, and in many parts of the country there were no trains at all.

The Sabbatarians distinguished between private and public control and this allowed them to justify the use of horse carriages but not railways, and the use of parks and gardens by keyholders but not by the general public.<sup>36</sup> The Sabbatarians argued that if all places of recreation and all railways and shops were closed, then all classes would be affected equally. They were unable to see that the superior resources of the rich enabled them to overcome such restrictions and that their recommendations thus placed greater burdens on the poor.

Above all, the Sabbatarians were concerned with maintaining authority. Their real aim was not to provide Sunday rest, nor to abolish Sunday work, nor even to give an opportunity for worship, but to outlaw sin, as they identified it. Their attacks on Sunday newspapers, museums and lectures, their safeguarding of Sunday Schools, and the Parliamentary preference for drink rather than museums and music in the parks, related directly to political power and authority and the question of how individual freedom to take part in leisure and recreation should be regulated and controlled.

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30 Faucher, L. *Manchester in 1844*, London, Manchester, 1869, p52.

31 Wigley, J. *Nineteenth Century Sabbatarianism. A Study of Religious, Political and Social Phenomena*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1972, p351.

32 *Ibid*, p52.

33 *Ibid*, p53.

34 *Ibid*, p113.

35 *Ibid*, p94.

36 *Ibid*, p105.

1 Population figures in 1831 were: Manchester with Salford 227,808; Liverpool 189,241; Leeds 123,393; Birmingham 146,986; London 1,471,941. Ashworth, W. *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning*, Routledge, London, 1968.

2 Burnett, J.(ed) *Useful Toil, Autobiographies of Working People from 1820s to 1920s*, Allen Lane, London, 1974.

3 British Parliamentary Paper (B.P.P.), *Royal Commission on Employment of Children*, 1842.